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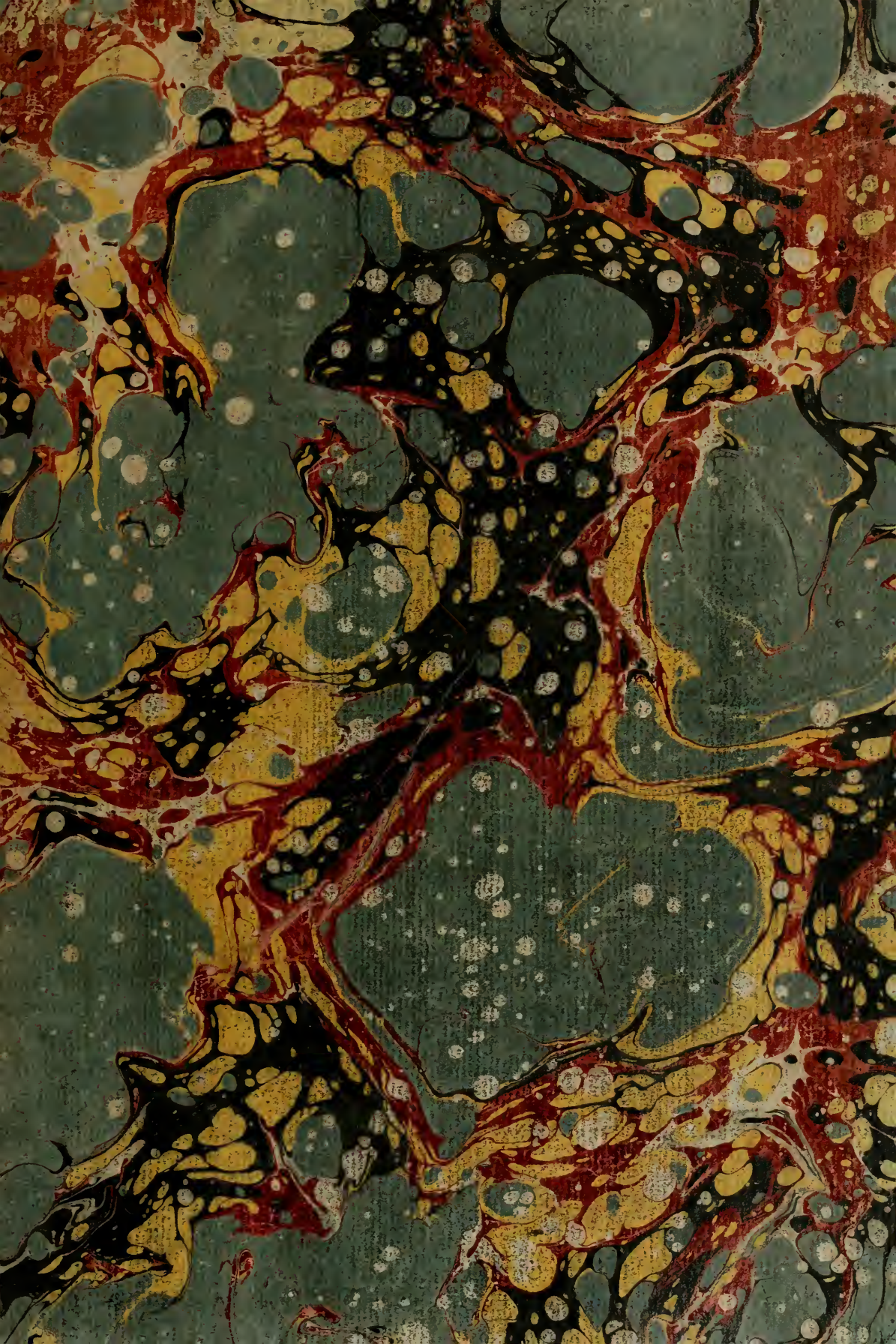

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Mr. B. Peters *Surgeon of* Cullompton, Devon.
Thomas Percival, *M. D.* of Warrington
Rev. Mr. Joſhua Parry of Cirenceſter
Mr. John Pyke of Chard
Rev. Mr. John Predden of Chicheſter
Joſeph Peachy of Siddleſham, *Gent.*
John Porter of Hull, Eſq;
Andrew Perrott of *ditto*, Eſq;
Mr. Samuel Plummer of Trowbridge
Mr. John Page *Surgeon to the* Briſtol *Infirmary*
Mr. James Pearce of Newbury
Mr. John Parſons, *jun. Merchant in* Tiverton
Mr. Thomas Pine of Maidſtone
Mr. John Pine of *ditto*
Mr. Simon Pine of *ditto*
Mr. Robert Pine *Surgeon* of *ditto*
Mr. Stephen Prentis of *ditto*
Thomas Percival of Royton near Rochdale, Eſq;
Mr. Samuel Powel *Merchant in* Rochdale
Charles Pinckney of South Carolina, Eſq;
John Perry of Cork, Eſq; *five Setts*
John Perry, *jun.* of *ditto*, Eſq;
Mr. Robert Pettigrew *Merchant in* Dublin
Mr. James Percival *Merchant in* Leverpool
Late John Peck, Eſq;
Mr. Ozell Pitts
Mr. Anthony Planck

Mr. John

Mr. John Phillipſon
Mr. Robert Paterſon *Merchant at* Waringſtown *in* Ireland
Mr. William Pitfield *Apothecary in* Exeter
Meſſieurs Payne and Bouquet *Bookſellers*

Q

Joſiah Quincy, Eſq;
Mr. William Quier of Chard

R

Francis Reynolds, Eſq;
Edward Ravenall, Eſq;
Richard Ricards, Eſq;
Walter Robertſon, Eſq;
Jonathan Raſhleigh, Eſq;
David Ravaud, Eſq; *three Setts*
Matthew Raper, Eſq; *four Setts*
John Raper, Eſq;
Henry Raper, Eſq; *three Setts*
Miſs Raper, *two Setts*
Andrew Reid, Eſq;
Capt. James Reid
Capt. Robert Redhead
Mrs. Ann Rowe
Mr. Charles Richie
Samuel Reynardſon, Eſq;
John Reynolds, Eſq;
Anthony Ryan, Eſq;
Mr. Joſhua Readſhaw
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Rev. Mr. Root of York
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Mr. John Roſaman
Mr. Benjamin Rutter
Mr. William Rutter
Mrs. Rhodes
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Reading Society at Leiceſter
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Mr. Edward Reed of *ditto*
Mr. James Reed, *jun. Merchant in ditto*
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Mr. Chriſtopher Roberts
Mr. John Richards
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Mr. John Rigg
Mr. Samuel Robinſon
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Mr. Robert Rampſhire

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John Rotheram of Dronfield, Eſq;
Mr. Samuel Richardſon
Mr. Daniel Race
Rev. Mr. Thomas Rennell of Drewſkington
Mr. Peter Raſbotham of Mancheſter
Mr. John Rigby of *ditto*
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Mr. Read *Merchant in* Leeds
Mr. Abel Rider of Trowbridge
Rev. Dr. Richie of Alſton Moor
Rev. Mr. Iſaac Robinſon of Carliſle
Rev. Mr. Joſiah Rogerſon of Derby
Miſs Rodes of Derby
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Mrs. Rowley, *ſen.* of Summerhill, Ireland
Maſter Clotworthy Rowley
Thomas Read of Dublin, Eſq;
Aymor Rich of Bullhouſe, Eſq;
Rev. Dr. Ritchie of Penrith
Mr. Alexander Rait *Profeſſor of Philoſophy in* King's College, Aberdeen
Rev. George Henry Rooke, *D. D. Maſter of* Chriſt's College, Cambridge
Mr. John Rooke
Mr. Gyles Rooke
Mr. Joſeph Ranſhaw

S

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Late *Right Hon. the Earl of* Shelburn
Right Hon. the Earl of Stamford
Right Hon. the Counteſs of Stamford
Right Rev. the Lord Biſhop of Saliſbury
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Sir Jeremy Sambrooke, *Bart.*
Mrs. Sambrooke
Miſs Sambrooke
Mr. Stephen Smith of Coventry
Mr. George Sterrop
Mr. Thomas Sterrop
Miſs Eliſabeth Sterrop
Mrs. Eliſabeth Sterrop of Worceſter
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Mr. William Staples
Rev. Gregory Sharp, *L. L. D.*
Rev. Arthur Aſhley Sykes, *D. D. Dean of* Burien

Late

Late Mr. Samuel Sutton, *ſeven Setts*
Mr. John Stephenſon
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Robert Surman, Eſq;
Alexander Sheafe, Eſq;
John South, Eſq;
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William Sheldon, Eſq;
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Mr. William Stead
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Mr. Thomas Saul
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Mr. John Slaney
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Mr. Scrimſhire
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Mr. Thomas Stanton
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Mr. Thomas

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Morgan Smith of Briſtol, Eſq;
Sydenham Shipway of Briſtol, Eſq;
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Mr. Lazarus Simon
Mr. David Solomon
Mr. Salvador
Mr. Joſeph Salvador
Mr. A. Scarlett
Mr. William Southhouſe
Mr. Robert Scott
Mr. Samuel Savage
Mr. Richard Savage of Leverpool
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Mrs. Ann Spyring
Late Mrs. Storke
Mr. John Scullard
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Mr. John Shields
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Mr. Phineas Serra
Mr. Gomez Serra
Mr. Samuel Sedgwick
Samuel Symons, Eſq; *and Alderman of* Exeter
Mr. M. Sheepey *Bookſeller*
Mr. Thomas Smith

T

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Stephen Thompſon, Eſq;
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John Thornton, Eſq;
Rev. Mr. John Thomas
Mr. Turner

Henry

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John Tucker, Eſq; *ſeven Setts*
Richard Tucker, Eſq;
Miſs Fanny Tucker
Mr. Samuel Touchet, *two Setts*
Mr. John Touchet of Mancheſter, *two Setts*
Mr. Thomas Touchet of *ditto two Setts*
Mr. Peter Touchet of *ditto, two Setts*
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Mr. Michael Tobin of Hackney, *three Setts*
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Mr. John Towers
Mr. Samuel Towers
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John Thornhagh, Eſq;
John Tollot, *M. D.*
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V

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Sir Joſhua Van Neck, *Bart.*
William Vigor, Eſq;
Kingsford Venner, Eſq;
Gwyn Vaughan, Eſq; *Commiſſioner of the* Cuſtoms
Walter Vane, Eſq;
Mr. John Van Rixtell
Mr. John Underwood
—— Udney, Eſq; *Commiſſary*
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Mr. Thomas Vigne
James Vere of Stonebyers, Eſq;
Mr. William Venables of Cheſter
Clotworthy Upton of Dublin, Eſq;
Samuel Vandewall, Eſq;
Mr. Vanhamurt, *two Setts*
Late Mr. Anthony Vicary of Exon

W

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Right Hon. Hugh *Lord* Willoughby *of* Parham
Right Hon. the Lady Betty Warren
Right Hon. Thomas Winterbottom, Eſq; *Lord Mayor of the City of* London
Hon. Sir Martin Wright, *Knt. one of the Juſtices of his Majeſty's Court of* King's Bench.
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James Weſt, Eſq;
Mrs. Winnocke, *five Setts*
Late Anthony Walburge, Eſq;
Late Mr. John Wilſon
Mr. John Wilſon, *jun.*
Rev. Thomas Wilſon, *D. D. Prebendary of* Weſtminſter
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Mr. William Wright
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Iſrael Wilkes, *ſen.* Eſq;
Iſrael Wilkes, *jun.* Eſq;
John Wilkes, Eſq; *ſix Setts*
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Mr. John Wormby
Mr. Edward Whatcott
Mr. Samuel

Mr. Samuel Willett
Mrs. Ann Wells
Daniel Wray, Eſq;
Philip Carteret Webb, Eſq;
Joel Watſon, Eſq;
Thomas Watſon, Eſq;
Samuel Wordſworth, Eſq;
Lewis Way, Eſq;
John White, Eſq;
Mrs. White of Wallin Wells, Nottinghamſhire
Miſs White, of *ditto*
Joſeph Waters, Eſq;
John Weyland, Eſq;
Abraham Wells of Blackheath, Eſq; *five Setts*
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Mr. William Warden
Mr. Francis Warden
Lieut. John Warden
William Wood, Eſq; *Secretary of the* Cuſtoms
Iſaac Whittington, Eſq;
Mr. William Warren
Col. Henry Willoughby
Mr. James White
Mr. Thomas Walton
Rev. Mr. John Ward
Mr. Richard Witts
Rev. Mr. Edward Williams
Mr. Samuel Wade
Rev. Mr. John Weatherly
Mr. John Wiltſhire
Mr. Waterman
Mr. W. Wolley
Mr. Joſiah Wallis
William Wilberforce, *jun.* Eſq;
Edmund Warkman, Eſq;
Samuel Watſon of Hull, Eſq;
Clerke Willſhaw, *M. D.*
Robert Warner, Eſq;
Richard Warner, Eſq;
Mr. Matthew Wilkins
Mr. Edmund Wilcox
William Wynne, Eſq;
Mr. Robert Weſtfield of Mile End, *two Setts*
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Mr. Cartwright Willmer
Mr. Henry Williams
Rev. Mr. John Wiche of Maidſtone
Mr. Timothy Waldo
Mr. William Wood
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Mr. William Wanſey *Merchant in ditto*
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Mr. Francis Wynantz
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Mr. Thomas Worthington of Nottingham
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Mr. Richard Whiten
Mr. John Wittingham
Mr. Edward Wade *Attorney at Law*
Mr. John Wright
Mr. John Wallace *Merchant in* Dumfries
Mr. John Wynne
Mr. Thomas Witherby
James Whyte of Overſtopbridge, Eſq;
Mr. William Whitefield of Cheſter
William Williams of Exon, *Gent.*
Rev. Mr. W. Weſt of *ditto*
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Mr. Peter Woodhouſe *Merchant in* Lancaſter
Mr. John Withington of Chewbent
Mr. James Walker of Manchester
Samuel Worthington of Cirenceſter, *M. D.*
Mr. Edmund Weſt of Chicheſter
Mr. Richard Weſt of *ditto*
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Rev. Mr. Field Sylveſter Wadſworth of Sheffield, *two Setts*
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William Wilborforce of Hull, Eſq;
Rev. Mr. Thomas Whitaker of Leeds
Mr. Abraham Whitaker
Mr. Wynne of Leeds
Rev. Thomas Walker, *M. A.* of *ditto*
Mr. Thomas Woolwich of *ditto*
Rev. Mr. William Waldron of Trowbridge, *two Setts*
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Mr. Abel Walford of *ditto*
Mr. Edward Whatley of Briſtol
Rev. Mr. Samuel Wood of Norwich
Mr. William Wolcot *Surgeon in* Dartmouth
Mr. Richard Wicking of Maidſtone
Rev. Mr. Welch *Vicar of* Roſſendale
Mr. John Wedgwood
Mr. Samuel Wilſon, *three Setts*
Mr. Simon Wilſon
Rev. Mr. John Wallett
Mr. John Willſon *Merchant in* Belfaſt

Mr. Robert

Mr. Robert Willſon *Merchant in ditto*
Mr. David Willſon *Merchant in* Liſburn
Henry Walker of Dublin, Eſq;
Richard Weld, *M. D.* of *ditto*
Rev. Mr. Iſaac Weld of *ditto*
Mr. Abraham Wilkinſon of *ditto Merchant*
Mr. Thomas Walſh of *ditto Merchant*
Rev. Mr. William Wilſon of Newcaſtle
Mr. Peter Whitfield of Leverpool
Mr. Whytall *Merchant in ditto*
Mr. Timothy Wyld, *two Setts*
Mr. John Welch
Mr. John Wowen
Thomas Woodford near Chertſea, Eſq;
John Wenham, Eſq;
Mrs. Wentworth Cavendiſh-Square
Mrs. Mary Welcombe
Mr. Samuel Wood
Joſeph Wilſon of Rivington, Eſq;
Mr. H. Whitridge *Bookſeller, four Setts*
Mr. James Waugh *Bookſeller, ten Setts*

Y

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Hon. Charles York, Eſq;
Hon. Col. York
Rev. Edward Young, *L. L. D.*
Hitch Young, Eſq;
Mr. Richard Yerbury
Mr. Iſrael Younghuſband, *Merchant in* Dublin
Dr. Young of Leverpool

Z

Mr. John Zachary

NAMES omitted in their proper Places.

A

Edward Aſhe, Eſq;

B

The *Rev.* Mr. Joſeph Brookſbank

H

Thomas Hunt of Shrewſbury, Eſq;

M

Mr. Francis Maſeres

ERRATA in the Names of the Subſcribers.

P. 7. 1ſt. Col. l. 20. for John, read *Thomas*, Birch of Mancheſter.
P. 8. 1ſt. Col. l. 20. for Kilrool, read *Kilroot*.
P. 10. 1ſt. Col. l. 7. for Mr. r. *Mrs.* Charnell of Snareſton, Leiceſterſhire.
P. 13. 1ſt. Col. l. 10. r. Miſs *Elizabeth* Danvers of Leverpool.
l. 13. for John, r. *James* Drinkwater.
——— 2d. Col. l. 1. for Eaſton, r. *Eaton*.
P. 15. 2d. Col. l. 18. for Anthony, r. *Andrew* Guertz.
P. 16. 2d. Col. l. 19. for, of Erome, r. of *Froome*.
l. 21. for, Meſſieurs Gamble, r. Moſs^m. Gamble.
P. 19. 2d. Col. l. 6. for late Mr. Hardman, r. *Mrs.* Hardman of Rochdale.
P. 20. 2d. Col. l. 16. for Jeymſſon, r. *Jeynſon*.
P. 21. 1ſt. Col. l. laſt for Mr. Katen Kamp, r. Mr. *Katenkamp*.
P. 23. 1ſt. Col. l. laſt for Mr. Lenox r. *Mrs.* Lenox of Dublin.
P. 24. 1ſt. Col. l. 14. read John Martin, *jun. Eſq*;
——— 2d. Col. l. 14. for John Malby, *M. D.* r. John *Matty*, *M. D.*

DISCOURSES ON SOCIAL VIRTUE.

CHAP. I.

On the ſocial *nature, and character, of* man.

I INTEND, in this chapter, to attempt a diſtinct and particular explanation of the true ground of all *ſocial* morality——A great and moſt concerning ſubject, and proper to be underſtood, in ſome meaſure, by all; becauſe a juſt diſcharge of theſe mutual *ſocial* obligations, which, in every age of the world, have been held and proclaimed as ſacred, is abſolutely neceſſary to perſonal integrity, to the peace and order of families, the ſtrength of civil communities, the dignity, improvement, and welfare of mankind.

In truth, the particular *relations*, in which men are placed to one another, by the wiſe all-preſiding providence of the ſupreme Being, ſhould be conſidered, by each, as his diſtinct appointed *ſtation* and *poſt* in human life; the more immediate *ſphere* of his

religious duty and ſervice; the *ſcene*, on which he is to form his morals, to correct and regulate his temper, to purge his ſoul of all deformities and turbulencies of paſſion, and to exhibit and cultivate his virtues, and eſpecially the *mild*, more *gracious*, and *amiable* virtues, that belong to ſociety. And all the relations, that *now* ſubſiſt, or can *poſſibly* take place, under the conduct of truth and right reaſon, ariſe from the *ſocial* nature and character of man, and may be reſolved into this as their *original* ſource——Which I have, therefore, ſtrictly following reaſon, and the natural order of things, propoſed to make the ſubject of my *firſt* diſcourſe.

THE *entire community* of mankind is, in an alluſive ſenſe, juſtly repreſented as *one* grand and vaſt body; in the *plan* of the Creator, of admirable conſtitution, and moſt excelling order, and formed for the nobleſt purpoſes of reaſonable life, intermingling benevolence, moral rectitude and happineſs. And from hence it follows, that the relations of *men* to *men*, and of *each* to the *whole*, muſt, while the preſent ſtate of things continues, be indiſſoluble; their dependence mutual, univerſal, eternal; their right to all humane and ſocial offices unalienable; their intereſts ſtrictly united and inſeparable. Thus has the almighty ſource of being, and parent of good, founded, and eſtabliſhed, the widely extended community of mankind, to be enlivened, and cheriſhed, by a ſpirit of benevolence diffuſed through *all its parts*; and given it a rank, ſuited to its powers, amongſt intelligent and moral orders, the moſt ſublime and glorious of all his works.

WHAT the members of the *natural* body are to each other, and with reſpect to the whole body, that the *rational* human members

members are among themſelves, and as parts of the complete conſtitution and ſociety of men. There are very few exceptions, that can, I think, be made to the general compariſon; and ſcarce one perhaps, in thoſe eſſential inſtances, on which alone the alluſion is grounded. In the outward *corporeal* ſtructure, there are no jarrings or contrarieties; there is no ſuch thing as a detached member, all whoſe functions terminate in itſelf. This would introduce the utmoſt diſorder and confuſion; render the body of man, as a *compound* frame, quite unſerviceable and uſeleſs; and blot out all the characters of adorable divine wiſdom, that are now ſo ſtrongly engraven upon it: Nay, the conſequence, in many caſes, muſt be, the immediate and utter extinction of animal life.

On the contrary, on what does its health, its eaſe, its very ſubſiſtence as a ſenſitive machine, its miniſtration to the ſoul, and to the high purpoſes of reaſon, ſo evidently depend, as on the nice proportion and adjuſtment, and the harmonious concuring operation, of its various parts? Might not a man altogether as well *want* a head, a heart, eyes, hands, and the like, as not have them *united*, and *conſpiring* in their influence, for *common* preſervation and defence?

In like manner, when *man* indulges to narrow and contracted views, and conſults, and acts, for himſelf alone, as if he was an unallied, ſelf-ſufficient, and independent frame; are not all his benevolent affections, all his natural powers of doing good, in effect repreſented as abſurd and vain; as fit only to be diſcouraged, and rooted out of the ſoul! Is not the life of *reaſon* loſt! The *ſocial*, the *divine*, life! Employed in the moſt exalted purſuits, and abounding in the pureſt and ſweeteſt pleaſures, that

human nature is capable of! And if the glowings of *humanity* were univerſally checked, and repreſſed, and the mutual communication of *kind* and *friendly offices* univerſally ſuſpended, what could this open to our view, but one wide and general ſcene of diſtreſs and miſery! What could it portend leſs, than inevitable ruin to the *whole* ſpecies!

To openneſs of heart, and mutual confidence would, then, ſucceed everlaſting *diſtruſts*, and uneaſy *ſuſpicions*; to delight in the proſperity of others, a malignant ſpirit of *envy*; to concord and harmony, *diſunion*, and *alienation* of affection; to compaſſion, *hardneſs* of heart. Theſe are the neceſſary attendants on a ſelfiſh *unſocial* diſpoſition. And they, in their turn, muſt propagate and ſpread the miſchief much farther; begetting mutual reproaches and animoſities; rage, revilings, cool deliberate malice, and other inflamed and unnatural paſſions; which deface the light and luſtre, and the ſtrong tendencies to *good*, which, in the language of the ſon of *Syrac*, God originally *poured out* over all his rational *works*; and anticipate the blackeſt horrors of hell itſelf.

That mankind therefore are a *ſociety*, or *ſyſtem*, linked together by inviolable bonds of reaſon, inſtinct, intereſt, no one who has examined his own inward frame, or made obſervations on the general propenſities, and workings, of human nature in others; no one, who has reflected juſtly on the fatal conſequences of the contrary ſcheme, can be tempted to doubt. That this is a ſentiment, which moſt powerfully inforces univerſal *benevolence*, and *ſympathy*, that enlarges and raiſes the heart, above the influence of every *baſe earth-born* paſſion, that inſpires it with great deſigns of

of *public* uſefulneſs, and gives it *god-like* feelings; the generous and good experience, and have ever allowed. There can be no true *religion*, no right *knowledge* of GOD, or of his immutable *laws* of nature and providence, where this is not admitted, as a fundamental principle: And all the duties of ſocial morality may be deduced, and, in a great meaſure, derive their obligation, from it. And, accordingly we find, that St. *Paul* has wiſely aſſigned it, as a reaſon, the firſt and chief reaſon (within the *ſcope* of which, all others are comprehended) why we ſhould *put away lying*, and *ſpeak every man truth with his neighbour* *.

TO which might have been added, with *equal propriety*, if the circumſtances of the caſe had required ſuch a particular and more copious exhortation, grounded on the ſame principle——
'*Be affable* and *obliging*, *modeſt* and *condeſcending*, *compaſſionate* and
'*tender-hearted*. *Rejoice with thoſe that do rejoice*, *and weep with*
'*them that weep* †. Aim, in your ſeveral ſtations, to be as *uſeful*
'as *poſſible*, and to communicate the moſt *diffuſive* and *general*
'good. Endeavour to inſtruct the *ignorant*, and reclaim the *vi-*
'*cious*, to revive the *diſconſolate*, to relieve the *miſerable*. Avoid
'criminal *artifice* and *fraud*, and practiſe ſtrict *juſtice*, and *fideli-*
'*ty*, in all its branches. Let not *prejudice*, or *pride*, or any *views*
'of private advantage, tempt you, let not a miſguided and head-
'ſtrong *zeal* ever tranſport you, to violate theſe holy and immuta-
'ble obligations. In a word, reduce all your appetites, all your
'affections and deſires, to that calm *temperature*, and, in the va-
'rious relations of life, behave with that *equity* and *candour*, that
'*gentleneſs* and *goodneſs*, that mutual *reſpect* and *honour*, as will
'beſt ſubſerve the great ends, for which *human nature* was conſti-

* Eph. iv. 25. † Rom. xii. 15.

'tuted

'tuted *ſocial*——and of *human ſociety at large:* For, as MEN—— 'we *are* all *members one of another* *.'

BUT how *members one of another?* This may, perhaps, be thought by ſome a ſtrange expreſſion, and ſcarce intelligible. For is the head a *member* of the foot, or the foot of the head, in the *natural* body; to which the alluſion is here made? Not ſtrictly and literally without doubt; but there is a figurative ſenſe, in which it may be allowed. For as every member of the body derives nouriſhment, and ſtrength, from what *every other* member contributes, together with itſelf, to the general health and vigour of the body; and as the fitneſs of each, to perform its reſpective functions, ariſes from, at leaſt, the *common harmonious* operation of all the *vital* members; the expreſſion, even though it referred to this, could have no impropriety of meaning in it. And much leſs as it is alluſive only; which never implies an exact ſimilitude, and correſpondence between the ſubjects.

'BESIDES, in the *community* of mankind eſpecially, the ſervice, 'which the *individual* members render to the whole, is not *im-* '*mediate*, but by directly aſſiſting, ſupporting, ſtrengthening, 'and comforting *other* members:' So that they are in the *firſt* ſtep, as it were, miniſtring members *one to another*; and, by this alone, can acquire the character of being ſound and good members of the collective body.

ADD to this, that the phraſe, which I am now defending, conveys to the mind ſeveral ſtronger and more diſtinct ideas, than the barely aſſerting, that all mankind are united together in one ſociety, or body; ſuch as ——The cloſe communion, and

* Eph. iv. 25.

conſtant

conſtant ſtrict intercourſe, of honour, fidelity, and juſtice, that is neceſſary to be maintained between men and men; as if each *individual* was himſelf the *body*, to which all *the reſt* were bound, as far as they had opportunity, to be *ſubſervient*—— their inſeparable connection for *private* advantage, as well as for the *general* good——their common wants, their reciprocal dependencies and obligations, and, that what is the happineſs of the *whole* muſt, alſo, be the true intereſt of all the *parts*—— All which principles, ſcattered up and down, diffuſely, in the writings of the *Heathen* Philoſophers, are comprehended in one ſhort maxim of that *divine* Philoſopher, St. *Paul*. So that let it be allowed, if the objector requires it, that, in the expreſſion itſelf, figures are heaped on figures; yet the ſenſe is clear and unperplexed: Recommending the offices and duties of humanity, on the juſteſt principles, and drawing in *ſelf-love*, to be itſelf an *auxilliary*, to the cauſe of univerſal benevolence.

I SHOULD now put an end, to my general remarks on the ſubject, were it not proper to take notice, that the ſame writer, in another paſſage, has affirmed of *Chriſtians*, as a ſingular and ſeparate ſociety from mankind in general, that they, *being many, are one body in* Chriſt, *and every one members one of another* *. But though they are *diſtinguiſhed*, from the bulk of the world, by the profeſſion of a more pure and refined religion, they are ſtill a ſociety of *men*; and bound to obſerve all the *primitive* rules, and ſtatutes, of that univerſal ſociety. It is impoſſible, that, in order to be a *Chriſtian*, it ſhould be neceſſary to ceaſe to be a man: On the contrary, if the *Goſpel*, inſtead of confirming, had abrogated the common ties of human nature, it would be both impiety, and inhumanity, to embrace it. If it

* Rom. xii. 5.

was

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was built on the ſubverſion, or deformation, of *nature*, it muſt have been a moſt abſurd and unnatural religion. *Chriſtians* therefore, as well as families, neighbourhoods, and civil ſocieties, are no more than *ſubordinate* branches of the firſt great and univerſal community; and this is the light, in which alone the Goſpel can recommend itſelf, to the eſteem, and honour, of wiſe and impartial inquirers.

And now, from what has been already offered in a general way, ſeveral very important obſervations naturally ariſe,

And the First remark, which I ſhall make, is this, *viz.*— that the *ſocial* character of man is not *accidental*, and *acquired*, but natural. This has been in part explained, and eſtabliſhed already; but as it is a principle of the utmoſt moment in itſelf, and of great importance in the preſent argument, it deſerves to be more fully illuſtrated. Without ſtating it clearly, we can form no juſt idea of *characters*, or *manners*; of what human life *is*, or *ought* to be. If all the *ſocial* obligations of mankind ſpring from preſent exigencies, in the outward courſe of their affairs, they will naturally be led, to repreſent them to their thoughts, only as *mutable* and *tranſient* obligations; which are utterly diſſolved as ſoon as the preſent neceſſity ceaſes, which unites them together, for mutual aſſiſtance and ſecurity. The whole of this great, extenſive, and illuſtrious branch of virtue, which has performed ſuch heroic enterprizes, and raiſed ſuch god-like characters, will be reſolved into *policy*, *private* convenience, and the moſt *debaſed* and *groveling* principles, eclipſing all its lovelineſs and dignity. It will be for *our own* ſakes, if we provide for our *families*, oblige our *friends*, ſerve our *country*; in a word, we ſhall be juſt and benevolent, only from *ſelfiſhneſs*: An account this

this, that ſhocks the reaſon, and the native inbred ſentiment of every human heart; and would be received, with abhorrence and diſdain, even amongſt wild and ſavage nations.

BESIDES, to what does it lead, but, in the end, to the ſubverſion of all order, and the utter extirpation of ſocial morality? For the ſum of this licentious doctrine is——'Do good, not as you have *opportunity*, but as you are likely to *get* by it: When it ſubjects you to any *hazard*, or *inconvenience*, to relieve your fellow-creatures——deſert them, and leave them expoſed to indigence and miſery: And whenever you think it to be for your *advantage*, and the proper means to eſtabliſh your own *private* happineſs——encroach upon your neighbours rights, deceive, oppreſs, impoſe on honeſt ignorance, and ſimple artleſs credulity; and trample under foot all the laws of ſociety.' *Intereſt*, it may be ſaid, is a ſubſtantial thing; *generoſity*, and *public ſpiritedneſs*, are airy flights, fit to be indulged by none, but romantic and ſoaring *enthuſiaſts*, who prefer fancies to realities.

BUT, on the contrary, if the ties of *ſocial* humanity reſult from nature itſelf, they muſt hold eternally, under all poſſible changes, that can happen in the external ſtate of the world, and in the circumſtances of particular men. Nay, if we could ſuppoſe a man left to wander, in the moſt deſtitute and ſolitary parts of the earth, without a probability of being ever reſtored to *converſation*, and *commerce*, with his fellow-creatures, he would ſtill be obliged to cultivate equity and benevolence, and all thoſe other *ſocial* qualities and diſpoſitions, which his very conſtitution ſtrongly prompts to; and which are the refinement and perfection of it. And by this means, man will ever be reſpectable, lovely, happy in himſelf, and ready for all offices of goodneſs.

And now, that the *ſocial* is, indeed, his true and natural character, appears undeniably from hence, that the love of mankind, probity, honour, gratitude, and the like (*abſurd* virtues, becauſe *impoſſible* to be exerciſed, but in a ſtate of *ſociety*) are however univerſal ſentiments, and ſo deeply planted in the mind, that it is ſcarce poſſible to root them out. The ſeeds of them ſtill remain, and appear ſtrong in various inſtances, even in the moſt corrupt and degenerate. And if theſe are indeed *natural* (as univerſal experience teſtifies) and not *occaſional* and *artificial* obligations, they are a clear demonſtration, that man was originally diſpoſed and made for ſociety; and not driven to it by incidental neceſſities, without any immediate direction, and bent, of his nature.

Again, *ſociety* is abſolutely neceſſary, in order to perfect the *moral* conſtitution of man. Without it, he could neither improve his underſtanding, to its due pitch of knowledge and experience; nor exert the moſt generous and pleaſing affections of his mind. His ſtrongeſt inſtincts and deſires, his innumerable wants, which cannot be ſupplied by himſelf alone, and his dependent condition, all lead him to *ſociety*. Eternal *ſolitude* would, of itſelf, make him miſerable; he therefore abhors, and flies from it; and to ſociety, as the ſource of his nobleſt employments, and moſt exalted, heart-refreſhing, delights. Add to this, that the faculty of ſpeech is one of the moſt ſignificant *indications*, that the God of nature could give, in the original make of man, that he was intended for ſocial intercourſes; and chiefly, indeed, for a life of ſociety. And the conſequence, from theſe premiſſes, is this undeniably—— 'That the *duties* of every *relation*, which can *properly* be intro-

introduced into human ſocial life, are laws of nature *irreverſible*.'

My next obſervation is, that man is formed, by nature, a moral *ſocial* being, with a view to his own happineſs. The independent unchangeable Creator neither wanted, nor was able to receive, any acceſſion of glory, power, or felicity to himſelf: What then could induce him to communicate *being*, but the communication of *happineſs* together with it; of a ſuitable good to all ſtates, and orders, of creatures, capable of enjoying good? And what is the *good*, which is moſt properly adapted to every rank of being? What can it be, but that which gratifies the ſtrongeſt implanted tendencies, and affections, of their reſpective natures? For ſenſitive beings, ſenſitive ſatisfactions; for intelligent beings, intellectual; for the *ſocial*, the pleaſures reſulting from univerſal benevolence. And from hence it follows, 'that all the *relative* ſtations, in which one man is placed to another, muſt terminate, ultimately, in the moral *ſocial* happineſs of mankind, if they are derived from *nature*, or conſiſtent with it.'

For whatever was the *primitive* intention, of man's being created ſocial, muſt alſo be the *ultimate* end, of all the particular relations, and offices, in human ſociety. Whatever tends to miſchief, upon the whole, is an *unnatural* relation; and ought to be for ever aboliſhed. And if ſuch a conduct be purſued, even in *worthy* and *uſeful* relations of life, as (if it was univerſal) would every where introduce unhappineſs and confuſion, it muſt ſtand condemned by the everlaſting laws of nature, and of God.

FURTHER, as the *ſocial* inſtincts and affections of human nature are *univerſal*, and *mutual*, and directed in their exerciſe, throughout the *whole ſyſtem*, from man to man; and as this moſt certainly infers, that all mankind are, in the diſpoſition and order of nature, one great and cloſely compacted body; we may, and muſt, conclude upon the whole, that their ſocial ſtate and character were intended, not *barely* for good, but for *univerſal* good: 'And this muſt be the true *aim*, and ſhould be the natural and direct *ſubſerviency*, of every relative and ſocial obligation.'

I SHALL add but one remark more, and that is, that the idea of men, as a *community*, neceſſarily implies in it, that there is a *governour* of this community; to whom the whole, and every individual member of it, is accountable. 'A ſociety without 'laws, and laws without government, and government without 'a ſupreme adminiſtrator of government, and diſpenſer of ju-'ſtice, are as much contradictions, as a living body without a 'head.' The *governour* therefore, who, in the preſent caſe, can be no other than the Creator of all mankind, and the father of their ſocial frame, muſt be like a *conſtituent vital* member of the ſociety, without whom the *whole* would inſtantly diſſolve.

AND from hence it appears, that the authority of GOD is moſt properly introduced, to ſupport the obligation of all *relative* duties. The *ſocial* nature, from whence they ſpring, the *motives*, by which they are enforced, the *pleaſures*, which they yield at preſent, the *happineſs*, to which they ultimately tend, are all his wiſe contrivance and conſtitution. Without him, nature, and all its laws, are no more than empty ſounds, without

out a meaning. By his influence, and power, they are invigorated; ſeparated from him, they die, or are reduced to a ſtate of non-exiſtence.

CAN we then, without renouncing our reaſon, conſider any thing as a *natural*, and not regard it likewiſe as a *divine*, law? Can any office, in *ſociety*, be a dictate of *nature*, which is not, at the ſame time, a duty of *piety?* Can we eſteem ourſelves to be truly moral men, for treating, with a becoming tenderneſs and reſpect, the *inferior* members of the great community, to which we belong; when GOD, the founder, the head, the life of it is not *in all our thoughts?* It is, moſt ſurely, an inexcuſable omiſſion, to drop the conſideration of GOD, in any branch of human duty; on whoſe being, preſervation, and government, the univerſe, and all its parts, do continually depend. In the ſame ſenſe, that covetouſneſs, and other vices, which alienate the heart from the father and ſovereign ruler of ſpirits, are thus deſcribed; it is an impious, and a kind of *idolatrous* practice, thus to center our ultimate views in *nature*, or any other *creature*, to the neglect of the *Creator*, who is *over all*, and *bleſſed for evermore* *.

SO that, upon the whole, we are hereby plainly taught, the groſs abſurdity of endeavouring, in any inſtance whatever, to ſeparate *morality* from religion; ſince even in *relative* duties, to which the notion of morality is chiefly confined, it is impoſſible to exclude a reverence of GOD, and a ſerious regard to his will and conſtitution: Or, if we act reaſonably and wiſely, 'to avoid 'conſidering them in a religious, as well as in an abſtracted mo-'ral, light.'

* Rom. i. 25.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Containing ſome reflections, and obſervations, on Relative Duties.

I PROCEED now, from diſcourſing of the *ſocial* nature of man at large, and the univerſal obligations ariſing from it, to treat in general, of what are more immediately called *relative* duties. And, here, there are ſeveral things neceſſary to be ſuggeſted, both to enable us to judge, more accurately, concerning their true *nature* and *extent*, and to put a ſtop to that too general *violation* of them, which ſeems now to prevail, among all ranks and orders of men. And theſe may all, I apprehend, be reduced to the two following heads——The great *importance* of a conſcientious and ſtrict diſcharge of theſe duties——And the *principles*, that are neceſſary to be habitually impreſſed on the mind, together with the *rules* to be obſerved, in the regulation of our temper and conduct; that we may be the better prepared, to behave with honour, and uſefulneſs to others, in all *relations*; in every *ſtate* of our more *immediate* mutual dependence; in the *cloſer* affinities of nature, and human ſociety.

AND, FIRST, as to the *importance*, the *ſignal* and *vaſt* importance, of an exact and careful diſcharge of *relative* duties. This is a point ſo clear, and the evidences of it are ſo common and notorious, within the compaſs of every man's experience, that it ſcarce, indeed, requires to be particularly inſiſted on. The neceſſity of a benevolent diſpoſition, of gentleneſs and condeſcenſion,

ſion, of ſocial juſtice, fidelity, and candor, ſtrongly appears even in the *loweſt offices* of life; which are apt to be overlooked, as almoſt unworthy the *attention* of the reſt of mankind; and the *affairs* of which are thought, to have hardly any *connection*, with the general order and happineſs of the world.

But when the characters are more *raiſed*, and of greater *influence*, it muſt be ſo much the more *conſpicuous*, that the exerciſe of theſe virtues is of the utmoſt moment; and the confuſions and miſchiefs, ariſing from the neglect of them, muſt be the more *widely* felt. Nor is it poſſible, in nature, that it ſhould be otherwiſe, but that all virtues, which are allowed to be becoming human nature, uſeful, neceſſary, in all ſcenes, in all conditions, by which the outward ſtate of mankind is diverſified, will however be attended with more *beneficial*, or the want of them with more *injurious*, conſequences; as the perſons, immediately concerned, have it in their power, by their authority, their example, or by any other means, to contribute, in a *larger*, or *ſmaller*, proportion, to the good, or hurt, of their fellow-creatures. 'Their being thus *adapted*, to all the *gradations* of ſociety, ſeems, ſtrongly, to intimate their *univerſal* importance; their *greater uſe*, as their natural effects are capable of being more fully diſcerned, and with leſs interruption extended—— the *high degree* of their importance.'

But all this, it may ſtill be ſaid, is in a good meaſure preſuming, and taking the point, on which the whole argument turns, *viz.* the *real importance* of theſe virtues, for granted. Let us, then, proceed to direct and poſitive proofs; and begin, with what is the moſt weighty conſideration of all——That the juſt and conſtant performance, of *relative* duties, is of the utmoſt

conſe-

conſequence to the intereſt of human ſociety, and of mankind in general. *Relative duties*, in the largeſt ſenſe of the phraſe, include the whole of *ſocial virtue*; all the obligations of men to men; and, in this view, they muſt either be of eternal and indiſpenſable neceſſity, or all *human offices* muſt be utterly aboliſhed, throughout the *whole* ſpecies, to the rendering man much more *degenerate* in his kind, as well as unſpeakably more *miſerable*, than the irrational brute creation——Who, though they are formed for ſome ſort of *ſociety*, and driven on to it, without reflection or choice, by reſiſtleſs ungovernable *inſtincts*, are capable of executing no part of its ſublime *moral* ſcheme, nor of enjoying any of its higheſt and moſt generous pleaſures; or rather, indeed, they *herd* together through a blind impulſe, of which they know neither the *cauſe*, nor the *uſe*; but are, with reſpect to their nature and all its original powers, ſtrictly ſpeaking *unſocial*.

'But we are now treating, not of *ſocial* duties at large, not of the duties of all mankind to each other, but of men particularly *circumſtanced*; of perſons more intimately and nearly *related*, and united together, by *ſpecial* ties: Such as huſbands and wives, parents and children, maſters and ſervants, magiſtrates and ſubjects, *&c.* All which, more *confined* relations, though derived from the firſt inviolable relation, that was eſtabliſhed by the wiſe author of nature, between the whole human community, and ſubſervient to the great ends and purpoſes of it, muſt, however, neceſſarily introduce *new* and *peculiar* obligations; diſtinct, in many inſtances, from the common promiſcuous obligations of humanity. Theſe diſtinct and peculiar duties are juſtly ſtiled *relative*, as the univerſal duties of men may, perhaps, be more properly denoted by the name of *ſocial*; but they are both equally

ſacred,

ſacred, and neceſſary to hold together, in right order, the frame of ſociety; and to the happineſs of the world.'

INDEED, *one* wiſe, affectionate, and tender *parent*, anxious and provident for his children's good, and diſcharging, every part of his duty, with the utmoſt care and exactneſs, will contribute very little *viſibly*, and ſo as to attract the *groſſer* obſervation, to the general order and tranquility. His *influence* may perhaps, to outward appearance, extend, ſcarce at all, beyond his own immediate ſphere of action. Whatever *exceeds* this may be, entirely owing to the force of a ſingular and amiable example; the operation of which muſt, in many inſtances, be confined within *narrow* limits, and cannot *diffuſe* itſelf ſo, as to reach any conſiderable part of mankind.

AND, on the contrary, *one* unnatural father, or huſband, void of decency and conjugal affection, or a *ſingle* inſtance of a maſter, imperious, harſh, and oppreſſive, may make no *perceivable* addition to the ſum of human diſorder, and miſery, upon the whole. The ſame may hold true of *two*, *three*, or an *hundred* ſuch examples, in theſe different kinds of miſbehaviour.

'BUT, what would be the caſe, if they were *univerſal*, and ſtrictly copied, throughout all the *various relations* of life!' *As far* as they prevail, diſorder and miſery always follow; if they therefore prevailed univerſally, would not the conſequence be, *univerſal* diſorder and miſery! It muſt ſurely be ſo; nor is it poſſible, according to the preſent laws of nature, and eſtabliſhed rule of the Divine government, in moſt caſes to prevent it—— But has the *one* unnatural parent a *ſingle* licence to be unnatural? Has the *one* tyrannical maſter, before ſuppoſed, a *peculiar* indul-

gence allowed him to be cruel? No: All mankind are, by nature, equal; or in other words, every man, in the ſame *circumſtances*, has a claim to the ſame *prerogatives*. If, therefore, theſe exceſſes are not *allowable* in all fathers, and in all maſters, they muſt be *inexcuſable*, and proportionably *hurtful*, in *all*. And this indeed is the only rule, we can follow, in eſtimating the excellency, and importance, of every ſocial virtue; and the infamy, and miſchievous conſequences, of every unſocial vice—If *all* men acted, as *one vicious* man, diſclaiming the ties of nature, and ſpurning at the laws and conſtitutions of heaven, thinks himſelf at liberty to act; what would be the *reſult* upon the whole? This is the ſingle point to be decided.

APPLY it, then, to the caſe now before us: And let *parents* and *children*, *huſbands* and *wives*, *maſters* and *ſervants*, faithfully diſcharge their reſpective incumbent duties; and let the ſame exactneſs, in mutual offices of benevolence and equity, run uniformly through all *other relations*, that may ſubſiſt in human ſociety; and it muſt produce the moſt deſireable and bleſſed ſtate of things, that the imperfection of human nature, and the numberleſs unavoidable accidents, which attend its preſent ſituation, will admit of——Mutual complaiſance, free unreſtrained intercourſes of benevolence and friendſhip, concord in families, regular government in civil ſocieties, and general harmony and peace amongſt men.

BUT if we *reverſe* this beautiful and agreeable ſcene, and ſuppoſe neither *parents*, nor *children*, *huſbands*, nor *wives*, *maſters*, nor *ſervants*, to take any care about diſcharging their reſpective duties; the world muſt either ſoon be depopulated, or ſink into a ſtate of *barbariſm*, ten thouſand times *worſe* than any, which is

is *at preſent* to be found, among the moſt rude and uncivilized nations. Which demonſtrates, beyond every exception, the tendency of *relative* duties, rightly diſcharged, to the eſtabliſhment and ſupport of human ſociety; and of the oppoſite vices, to its entire diſſolution; that the one are the natural means of proſperity; the other of moſt dreadful confuſion, and ruin, to mankind.

THUS the caſe ſtands in *general:* And we may, therefore, fairly preſume, that it cannot appear with a much better aſpect, when we deſcend to *particulars.* For the fate of the *whole* muſt involve in it (though with *different* meaſures of the common diſtreſs allotted to individuals) that of all its conſtituent *parts.* It may not, however, be uſeleſs to trace the argument a little, ſo far as it relates to every man's *private* concerns.

AND, here, it will be found, that the being exact and careful, in the diſcharge of all *relative* offices, is not more neceſſary for the welfare of the whole, than it is to *ſelf-enjoyment*——To the enjoyment of *health*; which the diſquietude and turbulence of paſſion, occaſioned by *domeſtic* jars and oppoſitions, and by a conſciouſneſs of *guilt*, (if we are ourſelves the *authors* of this confuſion) has a direct tendency to impair——And to the enjoyment of *compoſure* and *ſerenity* of mind; with which, ſtrife and variance, diſcord, anger, and impatience, are utterly inconſiſtent——In a word, to the enjoyment of that undiſturbed and calm temper; without which, we ſhall find ourſelves, in a great meaſure, indiſpoſed, both for offices of *religion*, and all *ſocial virtue.*

I NEED not enlarge on theſe heads, becauſe every man's experience muſt juſtify, and confirm, the truth of all that I have now briefly hinted: And may, without doubt, furniſh ſome *examples* too, among the *many* that occur every where, of perſons, who, from *defects* in point of *relative* duties, or direct *violations* of them (carried to ſuch an extravagant pitch, as to baniſh *peace* from families, and keep the mind in a perpetual *ferment*) have firſt grown *indifferent*, and, in the end, utterly *abandoned* all *thought*, about religion; contracted an inward habit of *ſpleen* and *ill-nature*, which rendered them diſobliging and offenſive to all with whom they converſed, and given themſelves up, ſo entirely, to a deſperate courſe of *careleſsneſs* and *intemperance*, as has thrown their worldly affairs into confuſion, and terminated, at length, in loſs of credit, diminution of ſubſtance, in extreme want and miſery. And the *fall* has frequently been, to render it the more deplorable, from *promiſing profeſſions* of religion, from a *mild*, *friendly*, *affable* diſpoſition, from *ſobriety* and *good œconomy*, and the *proſpect* of great outward advantages.

MANY other particulars might be mentioned, under this topic, of the ſingular *importance* of *relative* duties; but in a general, and a kind of introductory, account to a more particular conſideration of them, I think, what has been already ſaid may be ſufficient: And therefore, I proceed briefly to enumerate the *principles*, that are neceſſary to be habitually impreſſed on our minds, together with the *rules* to be obſerved, in the government of our temper and conduct; that we may be the better prepared to behave with honour, and uſefulneſs to others, in all *relations*; in every *ſtate* of our more *immediate* mutual depen-

dependence; in the *closer* affinities of nature, and human society.

THE best *general* preparation, for an exact and chearful discharge of all *relative* duties, is a benevolent honest heart: A disposition full of *benevolence*, that we may be furnished, with the principles of honour and truth, generosity and condescension, fidelity and candour, and with all those other soft and amiable qualities, which *hold* more *closely* together, at the same time that they *endear*, every social bond; and an *honest* mind, ready to perform, in its appointed *station*, whatever it discovers to be *right* and *fit*, and to adhere inflexibly to it, whether it be, in consequence of an original and universal dictate of *nature*, or an *express law* of Almighty GOD. Where *benevolence* is wanting, there is wanting, likewise, the very temper of society; its animating spirit; and the spring of its most enobling pleasures; and where *honesty*, it is absurd to expect, that any regard will be paid to the most important social offices, when they interfere with corrupt and sinister views, of private advantage. In a word, selfishness *cannot*, and art and dissimulation *will not*, act steadily for the common good, or in support of the mutual equitable rights of mankind.

'SUFFER me just to add, that *integrity* of heart must, in the necessary nature of the thing, equally respect GOD, the head, as *men*, who are the inferior members of society. It is as much concerned about what is *his will*, as what are *their rights*; which are all formed, settled, extended, and limited, by his wise order and course of nature. So that what, I at first asserted, comes to the same upon the whole with this, *viz.* that *probity*, *benevolence*, and *piety*, are the surest preservatives from all unfriendly, insulting;

insulting, and oppressive conduct; and will most effectually support the *peculiar* duties, of every *station* and character in human life.'

But, besides the cultivating, these *general* best dispositions, for the discharge of all human *social* obligations, there are other, more particular directions, proper to be observed——As for example, it is highly expedient, that we endeavour to get as *clear* an *idea* (and *impress* it upon the mind as *strongly* as possible) of the *wisdom* of God, in appointing the several *relations* of life—— In *which*, every man, within a narrow sphere, suited to his capacities of mind, and his natural powers of action, may give a *due scope* to all his affections, and principles, of benevolence, and exercise the most important branches, at least, of this divine virtue; by *which*, the different ranks, and just subordinations, that must necessarily take place among such creatures as we are, are *properly maintained*, and *regulated*; and the accidental *varieties*, arising from improvements of the understanding, from prudence, industry, and the just acquisition of authority, influence, or property, in greater or less degrees, are made all to *conspire* in the preservation, and strength, of human society in general. A station, and imployment, are provided, adapted to every order, to every genius, that *no one* member of the community, while he continues capable of *service*, may have a pretence to cut himself off, as it were, from *the whole*; and indulge to sloth and inactivity.

In a word, the *relative situation* of man is wisely ordained, to relieve the many cares and sollicitudes, to which he is at present subject, by the tendereſt intercourses of sympathy and friendship; to soften rugged tempers; to assuage tumultuous passion; and

and prevent that univerſal ſavageneſs, which would infallibly be introduced, and ſpread itſelf over all the world, if theſe *leſſer affinities* were diſſolved; and men were not more *cloſely* allied, and attached to each other, than they are, merely, by partaking of one *common* nature.

THESE are, all, evident marks of a *wiſe* deſign, and *gracious* diſpoſition of things, in the great original of nature: And the maintaining, conſtantly, a lively ſenſe of this, muſt be very efficacious in its conſequences, with reſpect to *ſocial* manners. 'For if the particular *relations*, in which I ſtand, be juſtly inſti-'tuted, I muſt think the *duties* of them to be indiſpenſable.' They will recommend themſelves, to my *choice* and *preference*, ſo much the more powerfully, as I ſee that they are not *arbitrarily* impoſed, by the mere uncontroulable will of a ſuperior; but are, in themſelves, *juſt* and *neceſſary parts* of the ſcheme, which the common parent of mankind originally *intended*, ſhould take *effect*, for their greater convenience, and happineſs. In this caſe, *reaſon*, and *authority*, are ſtrictly harmonious and confederate principles, that ſupport, and add weight to, each other; and it is likely, that the duty, required of us, will not be a *ſullen* and *diſpirited*, but a *vigorous* and *chearful*, ſervice.

AGAIN, let it be further conſidered, and frequently inculcated, that the *duties* of every *relation*, ſubſiſting in human ſociety, are *interchangeable*, and *mutual:* So that the *child* has as much a right to be ſtubborn, as the *father* has to be unnatural; the *ſervant* to be remiſs and unfaithful, as the *maſter* rigorous and cruel. The conduct on *both* ſides is, indeed, quite out of nature; an oppoſition to GOD; to reaſon, his eternal law; and to the good of mankind, the end of his government over *ſocial* beings.

ings. 'But if we could make the abſurd ſuppoſition, that the parent had a right to deviate, *thus*, from nature; the right of the other muſt inevitably follow, as the *conſequence* of it. And, therefore, if I, who am a *father*, reſent, and ſeverely condemn, my *ſons* diſobedience, I muſt, at the ſame time, virtually condemn *myſelf* (as one of an unfeeling, remorſeleſs, temper) for being deſtitute of paternal tenderneſs and affection.

But to enforce, eſpecially, the duties of the *two relations*, which I have juſt now mentioned, together with thoſe of *magiſtrates* and *ſubjects*, let it be conſidered farther; 'that all theſe relations muſt have been intended for the advantage, and happineſs (to the *utmoſt degree*, that their reſpective ſtations, and employments, will admit) of the *inferior* and *dependent* part, as well as of the *ſuperior*; in their more proſperous (if it be, *in truth*, a more proſperous) and elevated condition.' They are ſtill *men*; and muſt, of conſequence, have *a right*, as far as they are capable of attaining to it fairly, to all the *happineſs* deſigned for men; though providence, for wiſe and moſt beneficial purpoſes, with reſpect to the whole, has placed them in a *lower* claſs; nay, be they ever ſo much *debaſed*, and *ſunk* by their neceſſities. And this, one would think, ſhould naturally *repreſs*, and *keep under*, all ſwellings of vanity and pride, and *check* every inclination to oppreſſion, and tyranny, in thoſe of *higher* rank.

On the other hand, 'it is equally true, that no juſt reaſonings, concerning the equality of all mankind by *nature*, nor any peculiar privileges, belonging to any particular denomination, or ſect, of *religion*, can *abrogate* the laws of ſociety; or the ſacred mutual ties, by which men are engaged to each other.'

For

For mankind are by nature equal, *only* in this view, that, in the ſame *circumſtances*, they have all a claim to the ſame *treatment*. If GOD had intended, that *inferior* ſtations, and *ſervile* offices, ſhould not have taken place; he would have put every one upon a *level*, with reſpect to capacity, influence, ſituation, and outward advantages: But this muſt have been a ſcene of infinite *diſtraction*, and attended with univerſal *inconvenience*. Nor is it poſſible, that *Chriſtianity*, or any other true ſcheme of *inſtituted* religion, ſhould thus confound the order of the world, and ſubvert the wiſe eſtabliſhments and conſtitutions of nature. So that by this principle, all *aſpirings*, in the more *dependent* and *ſubjected* part of mankind, after an *undue* rank of equality, are likewiſe abſolutely *repelled*; and proved to be wild, inſolent, and impracticable.

TO the ſerious conſideration, and frequent impreſſion, of theſe principles upon the mind, that they may become habitual to it; I beg leave to ſubjoin the following brief directions.——That, before we enter into *any relation*, we ſet ourſelves to examine with care, what are the *duties*, which it *eſpecially* requires; what kind of *behaviour* will render us moſt agreeable, and uſeful, to thoſe with whom we are concerned, and beſt ſubſerve the general good——That we expect not *perfection* in any, nor lay too much ſtreſs on nice punctilio's of honour, and reſpect——That we make favourable interpretations, and the moſt indulgent candid allowances, in all caſes, that the nature of the caſes themſelves will bear——That we animadvert not, *too ſtrictly*, on little failings and indiſcretions; nor be *over rigid*, in cenſuring greater miſcarriages; which appear to have proceeded from precipitation, overſight, want of due reflection, and the like, and not from a vicious malevolent heart, or a real *intention* to offend——

That we avoid *moroſeneſs*, which quickly ſpreads and propagates itſelf, and makes others ſullen and diſobliging; *unjuſt ſuſpicions*, which are the bane of friendſhip, and deſtroy mutual confidence; *exceſſes* of *paſſion*, which blind the underſtanding, that it cannot form a right judgment; and *pride*, one of the moſt turbulent, and unſociable, of the bad principles, by which human nature is actuated; the *parent* of diſcord, and *averſe* to every office of humanity.

And, finally, that we preſerve a *calm* temper; or, if it happens to be, at any time, *inflamed* and *irritated*, allay the ferment, and reduce it to a ſtate of compoſure and tranquility, as ſoon as poſſible: That, being free from inward perturbation, we may the more regularly attend, to *our own* incumbent *duty*; and influence others, by our *example*, to the like moderation, and ſtrict regard to *their* reſpective *offices*.

Under the juſt impreſſion of theſe principles, and the conduct of theſe general rules, *relations* will, in all probability, be by all parties *worthily* ſuſtained; the chief *evils*, that now diſhonour human manners, and infeſt ſociety, will be *baniſhed* from it; the *ſocial* character of man will be raiſed, and retrieved from *ignominy*; and univerſal affability, complaiſance, and order, *reſtored* to the world, in ſuch a *degree*, at leaſt, as ſcarce any former age has experienced; and the preſent, alas! from the diſpoſitions and cuſtoms, that too generally prevail in it, has very little reaſon to hope for.

However, attempts to *revive* the primitive *ſocial* diſcipline, and a reſolution to diſcharge *ſocial* duties, in all inſtances, can by no means be deemed uſeleſs; becauſe they may *reſtrain* abuſes,

abuſes, which they cannot *rectify:* They may correct *in part*; where they have not weight enough, to bring about an *entire* reformation. All the remarks, contained in this chapter, I have thought proper to put together, in as narrow a compaſs as poſſible, as a moſt natural and pertinent *introduction*, to the particular ſubjects hereafter to be conſidered.

CHAP. III.

Of the duties of the married ſtate, *in two* SECTIONS.

SECT. I.

Of the duties of Huſbands.

IN the diſtinct conſideration of particulars, I think it moſt proper to begin with the duties of the *married* ſtate——becauſe this was actually the *firſt relation* contracted, the firſt *ſpecial* tie, and bond of union, eſtabliſhed in human life. And ever ſince, its primitive inſtitution in paradiſe, it has continued to be, in the *order* of *nature* the *firſt*. It is neceſſary to be ſuppoſed, *before parents* or *children* could *regularly* exiſt; and, conſequently, *long before* the diſtinct offices of *maſters* and *ſervants*: And theſe *latter* might, and its reaſonable to imagine would, in many inſtances have taken place, *before* mankind could have multiplied to ſuch a degree, as to form *larger ſocieties*; or to ſettle any of the various forms of *civil government*, from whence, the duties of *magiſtrates* and *ſubjects* are derived.

AND as the matrimonial relation is the *root* of all others, and has therefore, if we follow *nature*, a claim to our chief attention and regard; ſo the *huſband*'s duty, in the ſame order and train of priority and conſequence, appears, to me, moſt proper to be firſt inſiſted on. 'But as it is utterly impoſſible, to know what

what his *duty* is, or what ſort of *behaviour* may reaſonably be expected from him, without fixing in general, what *rank* he holds, what *character* and *office* in ſociety;' I ſhall endeavour to ſtate this matter diſtinctly, in a chain of connected and dependent propoſitions: Which will enable us to ſettle the grand point, by which the whole duty both of *huſbands*, and *wives*, muſt be finally *adjuſted*, and which is *interwoven*, throughout, with every *branch* of each.

And here, charitably preſuming, that I addreſs myſelf, by the far greater part at leaſt, to a nation of *Chriſtians*, I ſhall produce the teſtimony of *revelation* as an unexceptionable authority; but corroborated in every part, for univerſal conviction, by the concurring voice of *nature*, and the ſureſt dictates of *reaſon*.

And, in the First place, *revelation* teaches, 'that *marriage* is a *divine* inſtitution, and for all poſſible reaſons, but what virtually annul the contract itſelf, and are inconſiſtent with the very nature and deſign of it, *indiſſolvable*.' And that by marriage is intended, 'only the union of one man with one woman,' is neceſſary to be admitted upon *Scripture* principles; becauſe our Saviour has plainly intimated (ſince the courſe of his argument neceſſarily requires this interpretation) that God originally created but *one male*, and *one female* *: And in order to point out, in the ſtrongeſt terms, that this is the moſt holy and inviolable of all human relations, he has, farther, expreſsly declared, that *for this cauſe*, *a man* ſhould *leave* even his *father*, and his *mother* [*i. e.* diſclaim, *comparatively*, the neareſt and moſt deeply rooted ties of nature] *and cleave to his wife* †.

* Matth. xix. 4. † Ver. 5.

Secondly,

SECONDLY, 'The whole of this reasoning, experience, and the wisest observations on the real state of the world, confirm and justify.' For as the number of *males* is, upon the exactest calculations that have been made, no more with respect to *females*, than as about *thirteen* to *twelve*; this, allowing for the extraordinary but probable *decreases*, to which *men* are peculiarly subject, will reduce the comparison to as exact an *equality*, as the infinite *contingencies*, which may happen in such cases as these, can possibly admit of. 'So that if *one*, throughout the whole species, were, through his superior wealth or power beyond other men, to become possessed of *ten* wives, *nine* men, invested with equal privileges by nature, could have no claim to so much as *one* wife:' And the same holds true, in *proportion*, as to any other higher, or lower, number.

BESIDES *conjugal* affection cannot be maintained, in any just degree, where it is thus *divided*; and the jealousies, competitions, and intrigues between several *equal* pretenders (in their *own esteem* at least equal) to the distinction of the husband's *first* regard, must convert all families into scenes of riot and confusion; and engage both *wives*, and *children*, in perpetual schemes of opposing and supplanting each other. This therefore, as it is quite contrary to the plain *design* of the GOD of *nature*, could never, in itself, be a *constitution*, proceeding from his perfect wisdom and goodness: Because nothing can result from it that is *rational*, and properly *human*; nothing *social*; nothing but what encourages exorbitant gratification of wanton *brutal* desire. The very same may be said, with respect to *concubinage*; for though, one be acknowledged as the only proper *wife*, this is in reality nothing better, than raising *one concubine* above the *rest*, against the

the most evident dictates of *nature*, and perhaps without *merit*. The contentions, the mutual undermining arts, the designs of mischief, the mischief itself, will still be very nearly *the same*.

As therefore, THIRDLY, it appears from what has been said, that one *single* individual of each sex was intended, in *mariage*, to be united to each other; all *associations*, without the marriage-state, are equally unnatural with *polygamy* itself: It may, from hence, be most rationally inferred, that the bond of *matrimony*, as the doctrine of *revelation* has fixed and ascertained it, was intended to be *inviolable*; 'unless for such causes, as of themselves render it *void* and *ineffectual*, with respect to the principal *ends* of the institution, and the *mutual contract* voluntarily entered into.'

AND if this, again, be true, it necessarily follows from husbands and wives cohabiting for *life* (or till the contract *ceases* of itself) for the continued propagation of the species, and the proper education of children according to their various ranks—— 'that *families* were originally intended by GOD to be *societies*, the *seminaries* of mankind; and the *schools*, in which they are to be tutored and disciplined, and trained up for action in a more extensive sphere; for usefulness to larger societies, and to mankind in general.'

BUT societies can never be supported without *government*; and *government* and *order* cannot possibly be maintained, where there are *two* powers absolutely *equal*, *neither* of which is ultimately obliged to yield, and give way to the other. The only question, therefore, that remains is, which must *submit*, in cases of important competition with respect to family affairs (over which

which both have a real right of direction and government, derived from nature) the *husband*, or the *wife?* And let women of discretion and modesty be left, themselves, to decide—— 'Whether their sex is not, generally, the more *weak* and *defenceless*——Whether the party, that wants the *power* to *support*, ought ever to aspire after an ineffectual and useless *authority*—— And whether, tracing it throughout all nature, the supreme *decision*, where any supremacy can be allowed, be not always inseparably connected, with *protection* and *defence?* The question is not concerning particular instances, but what is the right rule upon *the whole*; that, whatever it be, is the *fixed law* of nature, however it may admit of some peculiar exceptions. The husband has, and must have in general, the largest share in the *negotiation* of business, in *providing* for the family, in the *acquisition* of property, in *defending* all the other branches of the society, of which he is, without doubt, constituted *one* head, from distress and insult: And ultimate *authority*, in the voice of nature itself, follows this.'

Let me only add, that I intend not in all this (as might easily be collected from what has been already hinted) to dispute absolutely the *right* of the *wife* to *govern*, because as she is chiefly employed in the management of domestic affairs, and, especially, when the husband is obliged to be absent, for a considerable space of time, this right is necessary to be admitted; or else entire *anarchy* and *confusion* must ensue: And, farther, that if the supreme authority of the *husband* be allowed as a clear and fixed point, it is more *immediately* directed over the inferior members of the society only; and with respect to the wife (and that in a very few instances, where there is a mutual tender affection, and a tolerable share of prudence) it is but more *remote* and *consequential*.

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'THE case, most *parallel* to it, seems to be, where husbands and wives are jointly invested with a *higher* sovereignty: Though both are *equal sharers* in the government, as to the *general* administration of it, yet the *decisive* power in all *critical* affairs, that demand an immediate determination, must he lodged in *one*. And the condition of the other is not so properly that of a *subject*, but of a *second* in authority.'

FROM whence it is plain, that *husbands* transgress the rules of their duty, without sense of shame, or regard to decency, when they are imperious and domineering; and behave as *tyrants* to *slaves*, rather than with that respect and honour, which are most surely owing to persons, who have a *natural* right to govern, though in a state of *subordination*: When they insolently boast of their *power*, and are forward to exert it in *trifles*: When they *dictate*, without attempting to *perswade*: When they will hearken to no *advice*, nor bear an *opposition*, however mild and gentle, to their schemes. This must have a direct tendency to alienate the *affections* of the *wife*, from so stubborn and morose a temper; to sow the *seeds* of eternal family dissentions; and, of consequence, utterly to defeat the *end* of that wise and sacred institution, which was intended, by the great parent of *both sexes*, to be the source of their tendereſt endearments to each other, and of their most choice and delicate pleasures.

AND now, I would fain perswade myself upon the whole, that no wife or virtuous woman can think, that I have stated this case *rigorously*; but rather with unexceptionable *moderation*: Because the *Scriptures* of the New Testament, and which they generally profess to believe, have spoken of it in a much stronger

and higher strain. The language of them is——Wives, *submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the* LORD: *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as* Christ *is the head of the church. Therefore, as the church is subject to* Christ, *so* let *the wives be to their own husbands, in every thing.*——Let *the wife* see, *that she reverence* her *husband* *——*even as* Sarah *obeyed* Abraham, *calling him* lord; *whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well* †.

HAVING thus, as I apprehend, laid the true foundation, upon the law of *nature*, and the concurrent testimony of the *Christian* religion (in which the supreme authority of the *husband* is expressly declared, and supported as a *right indisputable*) I now proceed to explain *his duty*, to the wife, more distinctly. And all the chief branches of it, at least, may be reduced to the following heads, *viz.* 'love; fidelity; convenient and decent accommodation, according to his rank and circumstances in life; respect; defence against injuries; the improvement of her mind, as far as there are opportunities for it, in religion and virtue, and the knowledge which is best suited to her character; and inviolate union.'

TO which, perhaps, may be added (though it be needless for me to specify them distinctly, as they are so immediately and universally obvious; and must arise from *present* circumstances, to which *summary rules* cannot be so easily accommodated) to which, I say, may perhaps, be added, a few *discretionary* rules, to prevent discord and variance in the marriage state, and preserve conjugal affection undiminished: That what was designed to soften cares, and to be a scene of most refined friendship and

* Eph. v. 22, 23, 24, 33. † 1 Pet. iii. 6.

delight,

delight, may not be changed, by an utter abuſe and perverſion of its nature, into the moſt grievous *infelicity* and *burden* of human life. And theſe rules of *caution* and *prudence*, though both parties are in truth equally concerned in them, are with peculiar reaſon annexed to the duty of *huſbands*, and addreſſed to them chiefly; becauſe they are generally apt to *arrogate* to themſelves, as a kind of prerogative belonging to their ſex, greater compaſs of underſtanding and ſtrength of mind; and therefore if this claim be *juſt*, and not aggravated a little by pride and ſelf-flattery, it is natural to expect that they will maintain a ſtricter *guard*, and the harmony of the married ſtate, and the regularity and good order of families, muſt *then* be ſuppoſed to be principally intruſted to *their care*. Their indiſcretions will be more *inexcuſable*, if their ſuperior abilities are preſumed, and allowed; as well as much more *miſchievous* on account of their greater influence, and the more prevalent force of their example. Let me now ſay ſomewhat, briefly, on each of the abovementioned heads.

THE FIRST branch of the *huſband*'s duty, to be conſidered and explained, is *love*. What St. *Paul* has affirmed, concerning the whole duty which we owe our neighbour, holds equally true in the preſent caſe——*it is* ſummarily *comprehended* in *love* *. This is the ſource from whence it *ſprings*, the ſpirit that *animates* the whole, the principle into which it may be ultimately *reſolved*. It is as the root to the branches, and as the ſoul to the body. This Apoſtle, therefore, has directed thus: Huſbands *love* your *wives*, *and be not bitter againſt them* †. Which is as if he had ſaid, 'You will entirely and faithfully diſcharge your duty as *huſbands*, by the exerciſe of a ſincere affection, in

* Rom. xiii. 9. † Coloſ. iii. 19.

all its natural and just *consequences*; and by avoiding all the *contrarieties* to love; all such injurious and harsh conduct, which will gradually root out of your own breasts, this *generous social* principle, and create *coldness*, *dislike*, and *aversion*, in the person, to whom you stand most nearly *related*; that is as disagreeable and distasteful to the *mind* (and especially to *ingenuous spirits*, which have a quicker sense of *ill usage*) as *bitter* things generally are to the *palate*.'

The same divine writer has recommended, this *first* and *chief* ingredient in all *conjugal* duties, in several other passages, and enforced it by a variety of strong images. Husbands *love your wives, even as* Christ *loved the church* * [with *like purity, truth*, and *fervour*, though it may be impossible, in all, or in either of these, to arrive at *equal* degrees of *perfection*.] *Nourish and cherish* them, *even as the* Lord *the church*: [Protect their *persons*, and defend their *honour*, though with great inconvenience and damage to yourselves, and even at the hazard of your *lives*, *even as* Christ *loved the church, and gave himself for it* †.] Again, *Let every one of you, in particular, so love his wife, even as himself* ‡: *So ought men to love their wives*, as their own bodies ‖. This is a branch of *benevolence*, that, let the principle itself be ever so refined and sublime, can scarce ever, in fact, be wholly *disinterested*: *Self-love* is so intimately connected with it, and in a manner involved in it. It is therefore added, *He that loveth his wife, loveth himself*; and the contrary disposition is represented as quite savage and unnatural, *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh* §. So that, upon the principles laid down, and most solemnly inculcated, in the New Testament, he that never

* Eph. v. 25. † Ver. 24, 25. ‡ Ver. 33.
‖ Ver. 28. § Ver 28, 29.

truly

truly loved his wife, or rises no higher, at best, than to a general cold regard, and slight affection, over-ballanced by a much greater degree of indifference, has voluntarily entered into a *relation*, without so much as endeavouring to *qualify* himself, for discharging its principal and most important *duties*. And the husband who suffers himself to contract a groundless aversion to her, and hates her without a cause, ceases to be a *Christian*; and is fallen below the sentiments of *humanity*, professed and acknowledged in all nations: Or, to use the language of St. *Paul* upon another occasion, he *hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel* *.

'THIS, perhaps, will be thought, from the too general custom now established, for the mutual commerce, and decent behaviour, of the sexes towards each other, *impossible* to be admitted into the *polite* world.' However, without being discouraged by this, or any other popular motive, I shall endeavour to shew, that the *Christian* directions above cited, relating to *conjugal love*, though *strict* indeed, and *generous* to a high degree, if compared with the *examples* that may occur in real life, are no more than a *finished copy* of the original rule, and institution of *nature* itself.

AND this may be made to appear, in an evident and undeniable light, from various topics——As, in the FIRST place, from hence, 'That the marriage state is, and must be in itself, the closest bond of *union*, and a state of the most entire and indissoluble *friendship*, that can subsist among mankind.' This, I say, it must be in *itself*, and not by means of ideas arbitrarily, and from mere custom, annexed to it. For can nature possibly

* 1 Tim. v. 8.

direct

direct to any friendship more *perfect*, than where there is an inseparable interest, and even communion in all concerns? When other friendships are most extraordinary, and strained to the very highest pitch, that the laws of mutual society between *all* mankind will allow of, they can only *emulate*, but never *equal*, the ties and obligations of the marriage state; because in the latter all interests are necessarily *invariable*, and cannot, even in thought and just reflection, be *separated:* In the other, the obligation does not directly spring from *nature*, but is, in a great measure, *arbitrary*, and *artificial.* 'It is by *imagination* only, that I can make the wife, the children, the whole family of my *friend*, my *own:* And, in acting upon this scheme, I may perhaps transgress other branches of my duty, more properly *immediate* and *relative*.' But, between husbands and wives, there is an entire communion of *persons*, *substance*, *children*, *servants*. The loss, to the *one*, is equally that of the *other*, in all these instances.

Let us, therefore, but admit this plain principle, 'that where *nature* has constituted the most strict and indissoluble *union*, it likewise intended, that there should be the completest and tendereſt *friendship*;' and it will from hence unavoidably follow, that the matrimonial relation is, in the reason of things, the *closest* tie of friendship, and requires the most *sincere* and *cordial* affection, that human nature is capable of expressing. The bond of, what more strictly is stiled, friendship is much *inferior* to it. Virtuous friendship is founded in love, in a degree transcendent to the general love of mankind. The love, therefore, of *husbands* and *wives* being superior even to *that* (which in its highest exertions, if it regularly follows nature, can be no more than a *transcript* of it) it must be the first and strongest of all human affections towards *indivi-*

individuals, and can have nothing above and beyond it, but the principle of *univerſal benevolence*.

AGAIN, this article of the *huſband*'s duty is enforced, by the *expectations* of the wife, her *natural* and *juſt* expectations. 'By adding the terms, natural and juſt expectations, I intend to expreſs my ſenſe, not of what *actually* is the caſe, but of what it *ought to be*. There are certain *views* in *marriage*, which *nature* preſcribes; and theſe are all proper to be conſulted, in order to the fixing, what are the general and ſtated *duties* of the marriage ſtate. Perſons may enter into this relation, merely for a *maintenance*; or for ſuperfluous outward *ſtate*, *ſplendor*, and *oſtentation*; but the whole of this is a vile *proſtitution* of the order of nature, and the poſitive inſtitution of GOD. If wives *contract* themſelves to their huſbands, upon the plan of *reaſon*, they do, and muſt *ſtipulate*——in exchange for the ſurrender of their *perſons*, their *fortunes*, and, as a recompence for their domeſtic *cares* and *employments*——for the returns of *tender affection*, and of all *kind* and *obliging offices*: The failure in theſe therefore, on the *huſband*'s part, muſt be a groſs act of *injuſtice*.

FURTHER, the *affections* of the wife are generally, from the complexion of her ſex, more eaſily engaged, more warm and ſenſible; ſhe will, therefore, more ſtrongly reſent every mark of *indifference*, and *alienation* of *affection*——Her cares, in mere *domeſtic* life, are the hardeſt and moſt ungrateful——her *pains* the greateſt, not only in the birth of children, but in the anxieties and ſufferings antecedent to their birth——She ſuſtains the moſt *troubleſome part*, in training them up to mature and ripened life; the whole, before they are capable of expreſſing, rationally, any marks of *obſequious gratitude*, or *good diſpoſition*, to compenſate

penſate for her conſtant attendance, and wakeful ſollicitude. And, therefore, for the huſband to deny her the comfort of a moſt cordial *love*, and benevolent indearing *ſympathy*, under theſe peculiar cares, muſt be to the laſt degree unnatural.

ADD to this, that her ſituation and character oblige her to a ſtate of cloſer *confinement:* And ſtronger marks of *affection* are neceſſary, to ſweeten this comparative *ſolitude*, to encourage her to give a chearful and conſtant attendance to all *family* concerns; 'and prevent, for want of her finding a ſuitable relief *at home*, her ſeeking after *foreign* amuſements of pleaſure and vanity; which are of a *contagious* nature, and will ſoon grow into ſettled habits of luxury and extravagance.'

IN the LAST place, the matrimonial relation having been proved to be *inviolable* (where no *extraordinary offence*, or *juſt cauſe* of its diſſolution is given) but by the *death* of one of the contracting parties; the neceſſity of a mutual ſincere *affection*, and eſpecially on the ſide of the *huſband*, the chief perſon engaged, muſt from hence undeniably appear: Becauſe nothing elſe can render, ſuch a ſtrict and indiſſolvable union, in any degree *tolerable*. The company of perſons, *indifferent* to each other, ſoon becomes *diſtaſteful*; if they are tied down to it without *redreſs*, they conſider it as a chain, and clog upon their liberty. This *reciprocal love* would not only *ſweeten*, but convert into the moſt deſireable *privilege* and *bleſſing* of ſocial life. But a dull, formal, affected *civility* can never remove the *diſguſts*, the grievous *anxieties*, and *averſions*, that will attend it: Nor can even the bare *dry decorum* of outward civility be long maintained, where there is no mutual eſteem and affection. So that *reaſon*, *prudence*, *intereſt*, all conſpire in recommending that part of the *huſband*'s duty, which I

am

am now conſidering; ſince neither order, nor family diſcipline, nor even his own ſatisfaction and peace of mind, can long *ſubſiſt* without it.

But, here, it may be proper for me to obſerve, that the *love* of *huſbands*, to their wives, cannot imply in it, the indulging them in any ſingular *humours*, and odd ſtarts of *fancy*, which have no foundation in reaſon, but ſpring from mere capriciouſneſs of temper, 'becauſe ſuch *ſingularities*, as theſe, are not only a diſparagement to their *underſtandings*, but render them really *unamiable*.' As there are very few men in the world, of any reflection or ſolid thought, that would be induced to love a woman at firſt, if ſhe appeared to be of ſo fantaſtic a temper, liable to *unaccountable*, and, of conſequence, *endleſs varieties*: So if it has been artfully *concealed* before marriage, the *diſcovery* of it, afterwards, can never be a natural mean either to *preſerve*, or *increaſe*, love; but has a direct tendency to *leſſen* it, if not to *extinguiſh* it altogether. And if huſbands voluntarily allow their wives in any *extravagancies*, beyond their fortunes, which *luxury*, or *vanity*, may demand, this, alſo, is rather a mark of *hatred*, than of a true and genuine *affection*; becauſe it muſt involve their *children*, for whom they have a *common* concern, and, in the end, the *wife herſelf* in infamy and ruin.

THERE is *no wife*, however *infected* with views and ſchemes of this kind, but what would be apt to reproach her *huſband*, in the miſerable event of things, with his too *tame* condeſcenſion and compliance. She would exclaim, with moſt bitter invectives, againſt any *indifferent* man, who ſhould thus contribute to the diſtreſs of her family. And can ſhe herſelf *conſent*, to act the very *ſame* part? Can ſhe *attempt* to draw in her huſband, to

be an *acceſſary*, to the utter extirpation of honour and natural affection, in both? This is quite unaccountable: And the *refuſing*, to gratify ſuch unreaſonable demands, is ſo far from being repugnant to the moſt cordial and tender *affection*, that it is, rather, the cleareſt *demonſtration* of it.

But the real *contrarieties* to *love* are —— '*ill language, a churliſh moroſe behaviour, public inſult, oppoſing reaſonable deſires, keeping an unnatural diſtance*, and *not endeavouring, to the utmoſt of our ability, to mitigate the wife's griefs, and promote her happineſs.*' And if, by her *inexcuſable* and *diſhoneſt* conduct, ſhe renders herſelf utterly *unamiable*; even in this caſe, where there neither is, nor can be, a mutual *complacency*, there ſhould ſtill remain ſtrong, in the huſband's heart, a love of *benevolence*; inclining him moſt ardently *to wiſh for*, and uſe the kindeſt, gentleſt, and moſt effectual methods to *procure*, 'her *amendment*, and re-eſtabliſhment in the paths of *virtue* and *honour*.'

Thus have I largely conſidered the firſt general branch of the duty of *huſbands*, towards their wives, and have ſhewn that *Chriſtianity* ſtrongly recommends and enforces it, as a tie indiſpenſable; and that it has a plain foundation in *nature*; that *reaſon, humanity, prudence, intereſt*, all concur in pleading for it, as one of the firſt and moſt important of all human ſocial obligations; and that neither *order*, nor *family diſcipline*, nor *peace* and *harmony* between the parties contracted for life, nor any of the *duties* of the *married* ſtate, can poſſibly ſubſiſt without it. I have, likewiſe, particularly explained what is *not* implied in it; wherein it *really* conſiſts; its proper *effects*; its *exceſſes*; its *contrarieties*.

And

And the general reflection, that naturally occurs to the mind upon the whole, is this——'That if *sincere love* be an essential part of the *husband*'s duty, it must also be absolutely necessary, and a duty equally incumbent on him, to take care on what *principles*, and with what *views*, he enters into that strict relation; from the just idea of which, an union of *hearts*, a mutual communication of *joys* and *sorrows*, and the most refined and constant *friendship* are, in reason, for ever inseparable.' If the considerations, on which marriage is contracted, are such, as, in the nature of things, can neither beget, nor preserve, nor improve love, they must be repugnant to the very *design* of the *institution* itself, and inconsistent with its fundamental *duties*. If *not to be* an affectionate husband be (unless in some extraordinary and excepted cases already mentioned, where the thing is in itself next to *impossible*) both unchristian, and unnatural, and an infringment of the most sacred laws both of religion, and social morality; for a man, as it were voluntarily, to put it *out of his power* to be truly affectionate, by engaging heedlessly, or on fordid, sensual, fantastic principles, in an affair of the most serious consequence to mutual *fidelity*, and mutual *comfort*, must be in a high degree inexcusable.

Indeed even marriages, that *sprang*, at first, from a real tender mutual love, are too often *dishonoured*, and rendered extremely *unhappy*, by coldness, want of confidence, and alienation of affection. But this, in many cases, may neither proceed directly from a mischievous unbenevolent temper, nor a deliberate wrong choice; but rather from *neglect* and *indolence*. The abatement of reciprocal tenderness might not be a consequence *intended*, or *foreseen*. Nay, perhaps, had it appeared *probable*, that this

would be the melancholy *event* of ſingular diſagreeable humours, or an imprudent careleſs conduct; both ſides might have been *alarmed*, and have *guarded*, more cautiouſly, againſt all occaſions of offence. But when a man aſſumes the character of a *huſband*, with a *diſlike* and *averſion* to his wife, contracted *before marriage*, this is a ſcene of premeditated and wilful guilt, that can admit of no alleviations. The firſt, though their indifference can by no means be juſtified, deſerve a great ſhare of our *pity*, at the ſame time that they rightly incur our *cenſure:* The laſt is intitled to no other compaſſion, than what may be claimed by *perverſe offenders* of *all kinds*, in proportion to the difference of their guilt; even from the moſt humane and generous diſpoſitions; who have the quickeſt and deepeſt *feelings* of the errors, and misfortunes, of their fellow creatures.

All this, it may be thought, is very reaſonable to be allowed in general; but it is not ſufficient to prevent the evils complained of: Are there not then ſome *particular rules*, that are proper to direct our conduct, in this greateſt and higheſt concern of human life? Without doubt there *are:* Rules obvious to the underſtanding, eaſy to be followed, and that are confirmed to be, wiſe and good rules, by the experience of all mankind. How then comes it to paſs, that they are *not known?* If they are, *really*, not known, it muſt be owing to groſs thoughtleſsneſs and inattention. The queſtion, I think, ſhould rather be, how it happens that they are ſo little *obſerved*; ſo generally, ſo fatally, *neglected?* The true anſwer to which is, becauſe men are ſwayed by *proud* paſſions, and the *baſe degenerate* views of avarice and luxury, inſtead of being obſervant of the law of reaſon: Theſe, I ſay, are their prime influencing *principles*, in that ſolemn contract and alliance, on which their honour, and ſome of

of the chief felicities of ſocial life depend. To mention, briefly, a few particulars.

And I think, in the First place, 'the moſt *debaſed* and *grovelling* view of all is, that which regards *merely*, and is *wholly* centered in the *fortune* of the wife.' It muſt indeed be owned, that eaſy and plentiful circumſtances of life are very deſireable, as they may be made ſubſervient to the moſt generous and exalted purpoſes of *benevolence*. They muſt, alſo, greatly relieve *domeſtic cares*, and prevent numberleſs *perplexities* and *inquietudes*; which *ſpoil* the *temper*, oftentimes, to ſuch a degree, as riſes, in the end, to a ſullen and inveterate habit of *ill-nature*. 'Or, if the ſpirit is naturally of a different turn, they, firſt, beget *diſcontent* and *impatience*; impatience, *peeviſhneſs*; peeviſhneſs, *paſſion*; paſſion, *inſult*; inſult, *returns* of abuſe and ill-treatment: Till peace is utterly baniſhed, and *diſcord*, with the *furies*, enter and take poſſeſſion.' Wealth and affluence, therefore, with a wife, who has the *other qualities* neceſſary to raiſe eſteem, and preſerve love, is a very good *concomitant*; where there are diſcretion and judgment to make a *right uſe* of it, and a temper to *bear* it.

But when it is the *ſole motive*, to the entering into this holy and ſublime relation, by which *ſouls*, as well as *worldly ſubſtance*, are or ought to be united; it becomes an inſtrument of vice, and is, in its effects, deteſtable. 'For is it poſſible, that a wife and good man ſhould avoid being ſhocked at the thought, of converting, even in marriage, his *pure* and *chaſte affection* for his wife, into a kind of *adulterous paſſion* for *money*? He, upon this ſuppoſition, is in reality wedded, not to the *perſon*, with

with whom, to outward appearance, he has made a ſolemn and deliberate contract, but to *mammon*, the *God of this world*; who hath ſo *blinded* his eyes, as to make him inſenſible to all the ties of ſocial truth, and honour, and reſolve the whole of diſcretion, and manly obligation, into ſelf-intereſt. The only paſſion, which he *felt*, has attained its *object*, and its *end*, without any relation at all to the *perſon*, or *qualification*, of the wife; and has, therefore, not the leaſt connection, with the true eſteem and love of the wife, any more than it has, with any poſſible method of *raiſing an eſtate*, whether with honour, or infamy. *Women* therefore have the higheſt reaſon, in the firſt place, to deſpiſe, and ſhun, theſe mercenary, unnatural, and impious *adulterers* (this is entirely the ſtile of Scripture——for *know ye not, ye adulterers and adultereſſes*, ſays St. *James, that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with* GOD *.) Theſe, I ſay, ſhould be the *firſt* objects of their contempt and abhorrence, ſince being ſunk to the *loweſt* ſtate of human ſouls, centering their *paſſion* in unanimated earth, in a concern where *ſincere*, *rational*, and *ſocial* delights are propoſed to their choice, and being, upon that account, ſcarce capable of ſenſations *moral* and *refined*; their wives are ſo far from having any reaſon to expect, from them, an *affection* ſuited to the conjugal ſtate, that they can, ſcarce, with ſafety depend, on the bare grateful returns of honourable *ſupport* and *decency*.

LET me only add, that as covetouſneſs is, in the holy Scriptures, by an elegant figure repreſented as *idolatry*, theſe *avaricious marriages* anſwer, in the ſame way of figurative deſcription, to the very *worſt* and moſt *unnatural* kind of idolatries, ever prac-

* James iv. 4.

tiſed

tiſed in the heathen world; *viz.* 'that of *human ſacrifices*, devoted, in the ſtile of the ſuperſtitious *Gentiles*, to the *God* or *Demon* of avarice.'

'ANOTHER too common reaſon, of entering into marriages, is, the *gaiety* and *ſprightlineſs*, and, according to the outward faſhion prevailing, the *genteel* and *polite* behaviour of the wife; I ſay polite, according to *outward faſhion*, becauſe the *true poliſhings* both of *male* and *female*, are meaſured by a more certain invariable ſtandard.' The *counterfeit*, the *falſe*, politeneſs has no other rule, but fancy, cuſtom, vanity; things unaccountably and infinitely various. And I call this a *too common* reaſon, becauſe it is utterly incapable, from the very nature of it, of producing a rational and conſtant affection.

CHEARFULNESS, and a lively agreeable humour, corrected by *diſcretion* and *modeſty*, are, without doubt, agreeable qualities in a *companion*, in a *friend*, and, moſt of all, in a *faithful inſeparable* aſſociate for *life*: But *gaiety* may be *want* of *thought*, mere inſipid *folly* and *impertinence*. It is either *agreeable*, or quite *nauſeous* and *intolerable*, as the temper varies. The *huſband* may grow more *grave* and *ſedate*, or the wife leſs *lively*; and, in both theſe caſes, all her *merit* ceaſes. If this be the *ſole* foundation of conjugal love, the *cauſe* is entirely removed, and the *effect* muſt neceſſarily follow. And what is imaginary *politeneſs*, as the *ground* of a ſtable and permanent affection, if my notion, whether from *reaſon*, or *fancy*, happens to alter? The whole of this, therefore, is no more to be depended on, for the regular diſcharge of the *moral* and *Chriſtian* obligations of huſbands and wives (without which marriage muſt be an eternal infelicity) than even the *love* of *money*, as the ſole and ultimate object.

Let

Let *men*, therefore, carefully avoid being entangled in this dangerous *ſnare*, which may ſoon be turned into a ſcene of *reluctance* and *averſion:* And *women* too, as the rank which they will then hold, in the eſteem of their *huſbands*, being merely imaginary, may, by an unexpected and unforeſeen ſhock given to their *imaginations*, be exchanged for diſregard and contempt.

'But ſuppoſe we are induced to marry, for the agreeable outward *beauties* of the perſon, with whom we enter into this ſolemn contract: Is this a *probable* means, to perſwade us to diſcharge the *duties* of the married ſtate, *as long* as the engagement itſelf continues?' Of *itſelf*, and unſupported by *other* qualifications, it is not: Reaſon and experience demonſtrate, ſenſibly, that *it is not*. It may inſpire *a paſſion*, but it cannot, *alone*, preſerve a *conſtant affection:* Becauſe beauty (let not the fair be immoderately *vain*) may be impaired, and quite loſt, in *diſtemper*, before its natural ſeaſon of *eclipſe*. If it ſhould eſcape that, it will be obſcured, and fade, through advancing *age*. The *love*, therefore, that is built on this foundation alone, cannot be, like the true matrimonial affection, *ſtable* and *never-ceaſing*; but muſt be ſubject to *declines*, to *inconſtancies*, to a *total ceſſation*. Let *men*, therefore, if they intend to approve themſelves to *conſcience*, and to God, beware how they imbark on this *ſingle* bottom; and *women*, however admired and flattered, lay in a ſtock of other *qualities*, that are more *ſubſtantial*, and leſs liable to *change*. Grace and lovelineſs of *perſon*, where there are amiable diſpoſitions of *mind*, gives them a more pleaſing luſtre and dignity; but, without *theſe*, it has no real value, either in reaſon, or in the common, ſedate, final judgment of mankind. But piety, virtue, good nature, diſcretion, diligence in domeſtic offices, condeſcenſion and modeſty, the *peculiar ornaments* of the female ſex,

sex, to which they are *appointed* by nature, and by the great former of nature, will, where there is a common share of *sense* and *humanity* in *husbands*, maintain an *eternal* love, and all the offices of indulgent and tender *care*, connected with it. Brutes and savages, in nature, may *deviate* from this; but all the considerate, and worthy, part of mankind, will *adhere* inflexibly to it.

'THE next branch, of the husband's duty, is *fidelity*.' This, as all the other parts, may in reason be reduced under the general head of *love*, already treated of. But all are not equally, and the greatest part are very little, capable, of tracing *consequences*, and deriving *obligations* from *one single principle*, in which they are virtually included. It must therefore be of use, in this, as well as in all instances of social duty, to express, and mark out minutely, the *several parts*.

TO this branch of the *husband*'s duty, *fidelity* to the wife, stands chiefly opposed the crime of *adultery*. This is not barely a *violation*, but an *entire dissolution* of the important marriage bond; upon which the *happiness* of mankind, their most *refined* and *elegant pleasures*, and their *surest relief* from care and anxiety (all confined within the bounds of *innocence* and strict *honour*) more immediately and necessarily depend, than on any other public and social obligation: Without which, the rational and moral human species could be retained within no rules of *order*, becoming their nature, no *decency*; but a variable, unsettled, roving *appetite* would, soon, gain the transcendency over *reason*, and introduce confusion every where: And which was, therefore, rendered *holy* and *honourable*, by a particular *sanction* of the universal Creator, who foresaw all the *probabilities* of things; as it had been originally declared *inviolable*, in the constitution of

nature itself; and has been proclaimed since, and transmitted down from age to age, as an *immutable law*, by the constant and wonderful *equality* maintained in the number of the different sexes; allowing only for probable *decreases*, to which *one* of them is particularly subject, in the course of human affairs.

AGAIN, the same crime, that thus opposes the first dictate of nature, defies the first institution of Almighty GOD, and the established rules of almost all wise societies, is, also, an injury to our neighbour in those *rights*, of which he is most *jealous*, and in one of the most *valuable* branches of his *property*; frequently more dear to him, and more tenderly cherished, than *ease*, *plenty*, *honour*, and even *life* itself. 'The *adulterer*, therefore, may the instrument of much more exquisite and lasting misery to the person, whom he injures, than it is possible, in many instances, even for the *murderer* to occasion.' Where the affection, on the side of the party *injured*, has been sincere and ardent, he infixes a wound, that preys upon the *inward constitution* of the mind, and renders it habitually *dejected* and *inconsoleable*, by alienating the love and tenderness of the *violated* object from the person that deserves, and has the only claim to it, and places the chief part of his present and temporary felicity in it; who not only smarts, and is deeply afflicted, through a sense of *his own sufferings*, but for the *prostitution* and *infamy* of perverted innocence, the *softener* of all his inquietudes. So that the vice, which I am now arguing against, disclaims, and utterly renounces, all *humanity*, as well as justice; and must, therefore, be ranked amongst the most detestable excesses of *inordinate desire*, and worse than *brutish intemperance*.

ADD

ADD to all this, that it ſows the ſeeds of implacable animoſity and diſſention between *families*; and ſcarce from any crime, have reſulted more direful and tragical effects to *ſocieties* in general, as well as to *individuals*. And we can hardly ſuppoſe, that a crime of ſuch uncommon turpitude, where the *iniquity*, the *treachery*, the *violence*, are marked out in ſuch glaring colours, and the pernicious *effects* of which are ſo eaſy to be diſcerned, can be *unknown* to any man, who has the internal faculties of a man, and makes the leaſt uſe of his Reaſon. It has therefore been ſtigmatized, as an act of horror and infamy, in all *civilized* nations, and as far, almoſt, as *humanity* itſelf extends. It was a *capital offence* under the *Moſaic* oeconomy; and has been adjudged worthy of *death* by the laws of many other nations; and, I think, ought to ſhare the ſame fate, under all equitable conſtitutions of civil government.

BUT beſides the guilt and miſchief of adultery *in general*, it has, on the ſide both of the *huſband*, and the *wife*, its *peculiar* aggravations. Thoſe, on the ſide of the *huſband*, are——'That he *abuſes*, and *violates* the *rights* of, the *weaker* and more *defenceleſs* party; whom he is directly appointed to *cheriſh* and *comfort*, and *protect* from all *inſult*——that he arrogates to himſelf more *ſtrength* of reaſon, and a greater *command* over his paſſions——that he is apt to *reſent*, with the utmoſt violence, every *diſhonour*, or *bare ſuſpicion* of diſhonour, done to *his own bed*—— and that his bad example is moſt likely to *influence*, and ſpread the *contagion* among, *children* and *ſervants*, to the total corruption and depravation of their *manners*. But enough has been ſaid on this head, eſpecially as I have, on another occaſion, publiſhed my thoughts more largely concerning it.

I THEREFORE beg leave just to mention another duty of the husband, which, though it be not commonly considered in that light, is, however, absolutely necessary to his fulfilling his part of the marriage *engagement*, and answering the great *design* of it. 'What I intend is, the taking care of the *family substance*, in which the wife has a common *right*; that it be neither *reduced* by carelessness and mismanagement on the one hand, nor *squandered away* in excesses of sensuality, and luxury, on the other.' For it can never be imagined, that any woman, in her senses, would voluntarily surrender herself up, so entirely, to the *power* and *will* of a husband, as that, whenever he pleased, he might throw all affairs into confusion, and reduce *her*, and her *children*, to want and misery. The very *nature* of the marriage *contract* itself, which was designed for *mutual* support and comfort, amounts to the same as a direct *stipulation* to the contrary: And especially, if the wife had a fortune of her own, on which she might have lived with *ease* and *independence*, and which was entrusted to the *husband*'s management, that he might *preserve* and *improve* it. In this case, I say, especially, the conduct, which I am now censuring, is not merely *indiscretion*, or *riot*, but a flagrant act of *infidelity*.

'THE next branch of the *husbands* duty is, to *defend* his wife against injury to her *person*, insult to her *honour*, and, to the utmost of his power likewise, against wrong to her *character*, and unnecessary vexation and disquietude to her *mind*.' For *her* person is, in a manner, his *own* person; *her* honour *his* honour; and *his peace* of mind *is*, or at least *should be*, inseparably connected with *hers*. And I have before observed, that St. *Paul* has urged this in such terms, as if he thought it an office so indispensably incumbent on the *husband*, that he ought to discharge it, though at the

hazard

hazard of his *life*. Scarce any thing leſs can be implied in theſe words: Huſbands *love your wives, even as Chriſt loved the church, and gave himſelf for it* §.

'AGAIN, *huſbands* ſhould always treat their wives with a becoming *reſpect*, a reſpect ſuited to their *rank*, and the *office* they bear in the family; that neither their *perſons*, nor the *authority* with which they are by nature inveſted, may grow contemptible.' Beſides, women are more *ſenſible* of *neglects*, more *ſtrict* and *nice* with reſpect to outward decencies, and points of honourable regard; and therefore will feel more ſtrongly every *ſlight*, which they imagined is offered to them, as well as *reſent* it more deeply. Upon which account, St. *Peter* ſeems to have recommended this conduct, both on the principles of *nature* and *Chriſtianity*, in the following paſſage: *Likewiſe, ye huſbands—— give honour unto the wife, as to the weaker veſſel; and as being heirs together of the grace of life* *.

'MUTUAL *inſtruction*, likewiſe, as far as there are *abilities* and *opportunities* for it, is another branch of conjugal duty.' But I have thought proper to introduce it, among the *huſband*'s obligations, becauſe St. *Paul* appears to have taken it for granted, that it would, in general, be an *office* more peculiarly belonging to *him*; when he ſays, in oppoſition to *womens* aſking *queſtions*, and *diſputing* publickly in religious aſſemblies: Let the wives *learn* of *their huſbands at home* †. And as for the points of inſtruction, they are only——the plain eſſential principles of *true religion*, not topics for *wrangling*, and to feed a wild intemperate *zeal*, which are inconſiſtent with the *native modeſty*, and utterly deface all the *graces*, of the *female* ſex;——and the

§ Eph. v. 25. * 1 Pet. iii. 7. † 1 Cor. xiv. 35.

know-

knowledge that will best subserve the purposes of *family order*, and *good oeconomy*, and support, at the same time that it adds a lustre to, the *social* and *domestic* virtues.

'FURTHER, the *husband* is bound to allow *his* wife, a *decent* and *honourable* accommodation, according to their rank and circumstances.' She has a right not only to all the *necessaries*, but to all the *conveniencies*, *comforts*, *ornaments* of person, *&c.* that are suited to her station and degree in life. And there are, I think, but two *limitations*, that can here be admitted. The first is, that what the wife requires must be *real* conveniencies, and *real* elegancies, and not the *excesses* of luxury and vanity; which *false taste*, the more it is *indulged*, is found, by experience, to be more and more *insatiable*. The other limitation is, that no such ostentation or expence can reasonably be *desired*, or reasonably *consented to*, as would hurt the interests of the family in general. 'Within these bounds, it will have the air of *tyranny* to *deny*; beyond, it would be *cruelty* to *grant*.'

THE LAST thing, that I mentioned, was, the duty of *husbands* in not *separating* from their wives but for reasons, which virtually *dissolve* the contract itself, as being *inconsistent* with the very nature and end of it. 'This I thought it necessary just to hint at, because though *divorces* are generally regulated in all well established societies, *separations* are not. And the *husband* has this step more in his power, as the common property is more immediately vested in *him*; and if he be of a singular or variable, of a proud or too resentful, temper, will, upon this very account, have stronger temptations to commit this *enormity*.'

BUT

But I chuſe not to enlarge on this topic, becauſe enough has been ſaid by writers, who have treated of it more profeſſedly, than falls within my general deſign; and that I may not be thought ſo invidious, by cenſoriouſneſs and ill-nature, as to have in my view any *particular* caſes.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the duties of the married ſtate.

SECT. II.

Of the duties of Wives.

THERE are ſcarce any of the branches of *Chriſtian* morality, any of the particular duties of *ſocial* life, ſo frequently, and ſtrongly, inculcated in the New Teſtament, as thoſe of married perſons towards each other. And, for this, there is an obvious reaſon in the very nature of things; becauſe there are but few duties, that are of equal importance, for the eſtabliſhment of univerſal harmony and benevolence, and, of conſequence, to the well being of mankind in general. And, beſides, the experience of all times concurs, in atteſting this as an undoubted, though a moſt melancholy, truth, *viz.* that theſe offices (which are, indeed, of moſt ſacred and eternal obligation, and indiſpenſable parts of all true religion) are too commonly regarded as things, but ſlightly, and more remotely, connected with the eſſentials of virtue, and eſpecially with a *religious* character ——And even many good Chriſtians (as they would fain perſwade themſelves to think they are) neither condemn *their own* conduct, nor cenſure that of *others*, with half the ſeverity, for being *ſtern*, *moroſe*, *tyrannical* huſbands, or *profuſe*, *ſtubborn*, *untractable* wives, as for offences of much *inferior* guilt; or, perhaps,

haps, for *mere failures* with reſpect to outward forms of piety, and the rigors and exceſſes of party zeal.

THE perſons, more immediately *concerned*, ſeem often to have as little, nay, perhaps much leſs, conſidered the duties that properly belong to their character, and which reſult from the moſt ſtrict and inviolable of all human relations, than many, who are quite *diſengaged*; to whom they are *diſtant* and *future*, or, at moſt, but *probable* ties. They are apt likewiſe, on *both* ſides, to be chiefly intent on obſerving, how the *other* contracting party diſcharges its peculiar obligations; every *neglect* here, their partiality and pride *aggravate*, and repreſent as *unpardonable*, as want of virtue and decency, heinous abuſe and inſult: As if they were united together, in marriage, to *ſpy out* faults, but not to *amend* them; to vent their ſpleen and diſſatisfaction, in *reproaching* each other for *breaches* of their duty, but neither to *practice* it; neither to endeavour to remove the *ground* of theſe mutual upbraidings, by acting as becomes their character, and the part which they ſeverally ſuſtain.

ANOTHER thing, which I have often obſerved with great concern, as a ſure mark of the decline of the *Chriſtian* religion, and even of *manly* virtue and reflection, in the preſent times, is, that points of *morality*, of the utmoſt moment, are conſidered and treated by the generality, as ſubjects of mere *amuſement* and *curioſity*. And the more important the duties are, and, eſpecially, if they are any way of a *nice* and *ſingular* kind, or but *rarely* diſcuſſed, the ſtronger are the *workings* of this *fatal habit* of vain curioſity; the greater *aſcendency* does it gain over the mind; the more does it *captivate* and *enſlave* it; till, by degrees, it grows to be the *chief* principle that directs its views, and ſuſpends, if it does not

utterly deſtroy, the impreſſion of every *juſter* and more *ingenuous* motive.

And this is no more, than what we find, by experience, to be the preſent courſe of nature, in all other parallel caſes, with reſpect, I mean, to *wrong* habits, and paſſions indulged to *exceſs*; where the *ſtronger* is always getting head, and extending its incroachments upon the *weaker* principle, till the latter is wholly ſwallowed up, and centered in it. The application of this remark is very eaſy to be made, to the particular ſubject, which I am now explaining: And the neceſſity of reſtraining this *idle trifling* temper, and being governed by more *rational* and *worthy* views (if we would either improve in the knowledge of our duty, or find ourſelves properly diſpoſed, upon all occaſions, to practiſe it) muſt be obvious to every common underſtanding.

But there are other bad diſpoſitions (which I think it proper juſt to mention, now I have proceeded ſo far upon this ſubject) that are obſtacles in the way of our receiving inſtruction, of our acquiring juſt notions of the principles, and fulfilling the obligations, eſpecially of *relative* and *ſocial* duties: And the two chief of theſe are, *levity*, and *pride*. That impertinent and vain curioſity, which I have already cautioned againſt, ſprings perhaps, generally, from levity of mind; and theſe evils can ſeldom be ſaid to differ, any otherwiſe than as *cauſe* and *effect*. However, as levity not only may be, but doubtleſs is, the occaſion of other exceſſes equally miſchievous, it deſerves, upon this account, to be diſtinctly conſidered; and chiefly as it is a *growing* vice, and ſprung up to an uncommon heighth of *public indecency*.

Man,

MAN, on account of the rank of his nature, the ſtate in which he is placed, and the views, with which he is inſpired, by the eternal Father of all intelligent and moral creatures, muſt certainly be, conſidered in himſelf, an *important*, *grave*, *ſerious* being. For him, therefore, to be habitually thoughtleſs and inconſiderate, is in fact to be entirely *irrational:* To go round in a mere circle of *animal* life, and have ſcarce any higher proſpects, than what brutes are by mere inſtinct impelled to, is to renounce his natural claim of *immortality*.

BUT the dictates of *levity* are quite the reverſe of all this, *viz.* to diſguiſe, disfigure, and incumber the *outward form* of man, that the *body* itſelf may appear as the *tenement* of a *ſpirit*, void of *thought* and *dignity*, and to baniſh all *appearance* of conſideration. 'And are ſuch perſons as theſe, who uſe their utmoſt pains to forget that they are *men*, fit for any *truſt*, for ſuſtaining any honourable or important *relation* in life? For being *huſbands*, *fathers*, *heads* of *familes*——without a ſenſe, or taſte, of things that are *decent* and *right?* Neither ſex, with this lightneſs and frothineſs of mind, are *duly prepared* to enter into the married ſtate; and both the conſiderate and conſcientious huſband, and the diſcreet virtuous wife, that are unhappily *yoked* with ſuch *contrarieties*, have, I think, *probable* ſhame, anxiety, and miſery, *direct* and *full* in their view.'

BUT levity of mind is *not more* a hinderance, to *huſbands* and *wives* weighing rightly their peculiar duties, and the motives, that urge to an invariable obſervation of them, than *pride*; which is deaf to all admonitions, and hardened againſt all remonſtrances, with reſpect to *defects* of *every* kind——againſt

thoſe of a *moral* nature, in a particular manner, where there is a deſire to be *thought* virtuous——' and againſt thoſe which regard *omiſſions* of *relative* duties *chiefly*; becauſe the character is thereby, as it were, brought into a *compariſon*, and there is an occaſion afforded, by means of a *reciprocal* tie, for *emulation*, and a pretence to *ſuperiority*.'

PRIDE, as its firſt and moſt natural off-ſpring, begets partiality; *partiality* too high an opinion of our own merit; in conſequence of which, 'it aggravates *our expectations* and *claims*, eſpecially from thoſe, who, by reaſon of a more near and cloſe conjunction of concerns and intereſts, have *claims of right*, *likewiſe*, from *us*.' In proportion as our own expectations are *raiſed*, above truth and juſtice, their rights muſt, in our opinion, be *diminiſhed*. And hence it comes to paſs, that both are diſſatisfied, not if *the caſe* be not *fairly* ſtated, but if their irregular *prepoſſeſſions* are not fully gratified. They exact, with *rigour*, what they imagine to be owing from the other party; but each are *ſcrupulous* and *remiſs*, and plead ſtrongly for *abatements*, in what is due from themſelves. Nay further, beſides *perſonal* pride, 'there is a pride of *ſex*, of *characters*, and *diſtinct relations*; which makes *huſbands* and *wives* equally preſume, that they ſhould be peculiarly *favoured*.' And as all this is *now*, in a great meaſure, and has been, in *ages paſt*, the actual ſtate of things, and the ſame is likely to happen, in a greater or leſs degree, in *all times to come*; there was the higheſt reaſon, why *Chriſtianity* ſhould, ſo particularly, and earneſtly, urge the duties of the *married* ſtate (as long as the *relation itſelf* can, reaſonably, be ſaid, to continue in its *full force*) as immutable dictates of nature, and irreverſible ordinance of heaven.

I BEG

I BEG leave only to ſubjoin one other introductory remark, tending to the more complete illuſtration of the ſubject before us; and that is, that there is ſomething very obſervable in the *manner*, in which the New Teſtament ſtates the reciprocal duties of *huſbands* and *wives*, as well as in the *copiouſneſs* and *ſtrength*, with which they are recommended and enforced. St. *Paul*, in explaining the duty of the *huſband*, inſiſts chiefly on *love* and its *attendant offices*. The affection which he urges is *refined*, *tender*, *generous*, *fervent*, *conſtant*. This he has ſet in a variety of lights; which deſcribe, at the ſame time, its tranſcendent degree, and its perpetual obligation, derived from *nature*, and the expreſs *laws* of GOD.

AND the reaſons of this are plain—— 'becauſe generally, perhaps, the affections of *men* are not ſo *eaſily* and *ſtrongly* engaged, as thoſe of the *other ſex*; and, if they do not enter into marriages merely from prudence, and worldly conſiderations, are ſooner apt to *decline*, and ſink from their firſt heighth and ardor, into a more *indifferent* and *cool regard*: And becauſe, while there is a cordial and lively *affection* in the huſband, all the *other parts* of his conjugal duty will follow of courſe; *viz. fidelity*, *protection*, *reſpect*, *honourable maintenance*, and *inviolable union*. He will find no diſpoſition, in himſelf, to *ſtretch* his authority to an *undue exceſs*; but prefer, to the haughtineſs and arrogance of a *maſter*, the more equal rank, and endearing character of a *friend*.'

BUT, on the other hand, when the ſame apoſtle ſets, before us, a ſummary of the duty of *wives*, *love* is not diſtinctly mentioned in it; and ſeldom, I think, if at all, in terms, inculcated, in any paſſage of the New Teſtament; though it be a tie of

of nature unalterable and ever binding on the *wife*, as much as on the *husband*. And why, then, it will be asked, is this *difference* made? Will not all the parts of conjugal duty, on the side of the *wife*, spring as naturally from love, as in the case already mentioned? *Fidelity* here, as in the other instance, and *soft ingenuous manners*, will, most certainly, flow from it——I allow all this; and that the only just principle, of the rational and chearful *submission* of the wife, is *love*. 'But *submission*, notwithstanding, is enforced, as the capital and leading article of the *duty* of *wives*, on very substantial grounds——Not so much, as it is the *root* of all others, but as the *foundation*, on which *objections* and *difficulties* may arise, and *breaches* of mutual affection.'

In the point of *love*, as was hinted before, *women* are not so liable to fail. 'As a *passion*, it is, in their breasts, more intense and deeply riveted; and whether with *reason*, or as a *mere impulse*, longer retained. It will stand the shock of many *lesser indignities*; and, oftentimes, even *violence* and *outrage* itself, unless repeated and continued beyond all human sufferance, will not be able *entirely* to *quell it*. This may be a *weakness*, and a *fond transport*, beyond the strict rule of *nature*, but it is much more eligible, and unspeakably less pernicious in its consequences, than a *mutable* and *transient* affection; because the fondness, while it continues, will be as *studious* to *oblige*, and as *effectual* to preserve *peace* and *harmony* in families, and *assiduity* and *zeal* in all *domestic* services, as the most correct and discreetly regulated love.'

To what has been already offered, concerning the indiscreet and too eager contentions, that are likely to commence (and, in persons of little knowledge, sense of *Christian* duty, or of unquiet

quiet tempers, do precipitately and fatally commence) on the topics of the huſbands *authority*, and the wives *obedience*, I have this farther to add: That as the point, in which the *huſband* is moſt likely to grow remiſs, is that of an equal unabating *love*; ſo the moſt dangerous *temptation*, on the ſide of the *wife*, is to queſtion, to reſtrain, and at length utterly to annul, her own natural and indiſpenſable duty of *ſubmiſſion*, though it be ſtill, in *words*, acknowledged.

The affair of *ſubjection*, as we ſee by conſtant experience, is irkſome and grievous to *both ſexes*; who are not only fond, againſt the wiſe ordinance of nature, of an univerſal equality, or, at leaſt, each of being brought upon *a level* with all others, that are *neareſt* their own ſituation and rank in life, but aſpire, through vanity, and immoderate ſelf flattery, to a *preheminence*. Men and women, both, indulge this *ſilly* and *unnatural* affectation. I call it *unnatural*, becauſe it muſt be the confuſion of all order, and the entire diſſolution of human ſociety; and becauſe it is a *romantic* ſcheme, impoſſible to take *effect*; and *fooliſh*, becauſe it is both *unnatural* and *impoſſible*. But ſuch, however, is the fact. To preſs *ſubmiſſion*, therefore, as the chief duty of the *ſubordinate* part, and *love*, to temper the authority and rigour of the *ſuperior*, muſt be proper in all *moral* ſyſtems, and eſpecially in inſtitutes of *Divine* morality.

After this preliminary introduction, to *ſoften* the firſt branch of the duty of *wives*, *viz.* ſubmiſſion, I proceed to diſcourſe more largely on *that*, and on the other parts of her duty——which are *love*, *fidelity*, *prudence*, *frugality*, *meekneſs*, and *modeſty*. Many of theſe appear, on the firſt propoſal, to be moſt lovely and attractive virtues, calculated for rendering the ſex peculiarly *amiable*;

able; and for gaining it an equal, in fact a *ſuperior*, influence, to any mere inveſtiture of *natural* authority.

THE firſt head then, of the duty of *wives*, which remains to be ſtill farther conſidered and explained, is *ſubmiſſion*. I call it the *firſt*, becauſe, as, we have already ſeen, it is, in the *partition* of conjugal duties, the branch *peculiarly* aſſigned to them; and what St. *Paul* has fixed upon (as it is uſual in Scripture, to make choice of *one cardinal* point of religion and virtue, to denote the *whole*) as the great article, by which the *character* of the wife will be determined.

BUT give me leave to obſerve, together with this, that the ſame Apoſtle, in his epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, introduces *this* injunction, which to many, who are not enough acquainted with the wiſe conſtitution of the GOD of nature, carries with it a harſh and diſcouraging aſpect, with moſt excellent and engaging addreſs; by inculcating, immediately before it, 'the *univerſal* ſubmiſſion of mankind to each other.' *Submit yourſelves*, ſays he, *one to another, in the fear of* GOD: And then directly follows, Wives, *ſubmit yourſelves unto your own huſbands, as unto the* LORD *. A ſubjection, in many offices of life, is the duty of *all* without exception; ſince all mankind are held together, by their *inſeparable* intereſts, and *common* ſtate of dependence upon each other. 'The *ſubmiſſion*, in *all* inſtances, is no *other*, no *more*, than what reaſon, and the poſitive law of GOD direct to; it is equally *wiſe*, equally *neceſſary*, equally *ſubſervient*, to the *univerſal* good; and, in proportion to their rank, and the expectations they can juſtly form, to the good of *every particular member* of the whole.'

* Eph. v. 21, 22.

AND

And it is not at all unlikely, that a ſtate of *ſuperiority* may, frequently, have more inconveniencies, and mortifications, attending it (eſpecially, where there is the *pride* of ſuperior rank and power) than even a ſtate of ſubjection. This muſt certainly be the caſe, if the *inferior* has taken any care, to cultivate the habits of *moderation* and *humility*, that are beſt ſuited and adapted to his circumſtances.——To comply, where there are ſtrong temptations to *arrogance* and *tyranny*, may be vaſtly more difficult in numberleſs caſes, than to ſubmit, where *nature* plainly intended ſubmiſſion, to be one of its ſettled *laws*; where there, generally, are not the proper *talents*, for the exerciſe of *authority*; and it would deprive, even the *aſpiring* perſon, of that *protection* and *defence*, which are neceſſary for its convenient, and honourable, ſubſiſtence in life.

If it be aſked, what are the *meaſures*, and *boundaries*, of conjugal ſubmiſſion: I anſwer, things *lawful*, *decent*, *modeſt*, *honourable*. 'In the *contrary* to theſe, *wives* muſt be *at liberty* to diſſent, and, if too cloſely preſſed, to *refuſe ſubmiſſion*; ſince the very *ſubjects* of *civil authority*, who are placed in a much *inferior* degree to them, are not only *authoriſed*, but it is their *duty*, to oppoſe the unreaſonable and deſtructive ſchemes of arbitrary power.' In all other caſes, where the thing conteſted is neither *immoral*, *indecent*, *immodeſt*, nor *diſhonourable*, the wife, if ſhe cannot prevail by ſober and calm remonſtrances, is under an obligation to *yield*. Perſuaſion, and the utmoſt force of reaſon, ſhe may juſtly make uſe of; but, if theſe are ineffectual, ſubmiſſion, for the good and order of the *whole*, is her wiſely appointed *duty*.

LET me add here, though it has been juſt hinted at before, another motive, to corroborate and enforce the more general motives from religion and virtue, already ſuggeſted, *viz.* that the wife is much more likely to gain the *end*, which ſhe herſelf aims at, by *ſubmiſſion*, than by a proud and unnatural *oppoſition*. If ſhe is gentle and obliging, and, inſtead of appearing deſirous of *power*, is wholly intent on offices of *love*, ſhe may have an equal *rule* with the huſband, in moſt caſes; and will, in all probability, if we form our judgment upon common *experience*, have a degree of *tranſcendency*, which GOD and nature have not allotted to her. In this caſe, as well as in moſt others, has the wiſe author of the human conſtitution, inſeparably connected the *duty*, and *intereſt*, of every individual, in the race of mankind.

THE next branch of the duty of *wives*, which, according to the order propoſed, I am now to conſider, is *love*; an undiſſembled, chaſte, generous, ſympathizing, conſtant love. Love of a *friend* there may be, and of other particular *relations*, beſides this; theſe are all diſtinct branches and offices of univerſal benevolence; but, in what is properly called *conjugal affection*, no object, but the *huſband*, ought to have the *leaſt ſhare*. And *this*, of which we are now only ſpeaking, may then be ſaid to be *undiſſembled*, when it is centered in him *alone*. The ſame is, likewiſe, one character of *chaſte* love; as another is, that it ſprings from reaſon, friendſhip, virtue, the ſublimeſt ties to *mutual affection*, and not from *paſſion*, and mere animal *impulſe*. And if this be the caſe, it will be *tender* without growing nauſeous; *generous* from its principles; *ſympathizing* on the nobleſt ground of rational eſteem, and complacency; and equally *conſtant*

ſtant in youth and age, in ſickneſs and health, in plenty and indigence, and all the *revolutions*, and *varieties*, of outward condition——which reaſon and generous love are prepared to *encounter*.

And that this belongs, indiſpenſably, to the *duty* of *wives*, may be argued from all the general topics, by which I have, before, enforced the ſame branch of the huſband's duty——*viz.* First, The *nature* of the matrimonial *relation* as in reaſon, and by the expreſs inſtitution of God, a ſtate of the moſt intimate union, the moſt perfect and exalted friendſhip: A *ſtate*, in which children, ſervants, ſubſtance, perſons, are, as it were, inſeparably mixed and blended together. So that the love of the wife, and of the huſband, are in a manner *ſelf-love*, as properly as they are acts of benevolence; an averſion to the wife, or to the huſband, the ſame as *ſelf-averſion*, and an alienation of the heart from our own true intereſt.

Besides the obligation to *love*, in all caſes of this kind, muſt neceſſarily imply, in it, an obligation to *mutual love*, and the wife muſt either be bound to *exerciſe*, and *cultivate*, ſoft and tender ſentiments, with reſpect to her huſband, or ſhe cannot, upon any rules and meaſures of juſtice, expect the *returns* of affection from him. 'In truth, the *obligation* in her ſex (if any *difference* can at all be made) is rather more explicitly, and ſtrongly, enforced by *nature*; as ſhe has, from her *very make*, peculiar diſpoſitions, and incitements, to *kind* and *endearing* offices.'

Add to this, that as the *wife* has ſome particular circumſtances, attending her ſtation, that require to be ſweetened and

relieved, ſo has the *huſband*. Her *pains* may be the greateſt; but, as a ballance to that, perhaps, upon the whole, his *anxieties*. The *breeding*, and *nouriſhing*, the tender infant family; are *her* peculiar allotment; but the ſollicitude of providing for their *maintenance*, for their *ſecurity*, *comfort*, and *honour*, in all future life, falls more immediately, within *his* province.

In the execution of this *truſt*, he is liable to numberleſs *diſappointments* and *embaraſſments*, unforeſeen, and conſequently unprovided for; he is obliged to watch carefully opportunities of *advantage*, to guard againſt occaſions of *loſs* and *detriment*, to repel *fraud*, to prevent being over reached by *cunning* and *avarice*, and obviate the ill effects of *indiſcretion*, or of *confidence unfitly* repoſed. He will probably meet with ſuch *oppoſitions*, and have ſuch *contrarieties* of temper to deal with, as may put his *patience* to its utmoſt proof; and, after all the efforts of his reaſon, and moderation, *irritate* and *ruffle* his mind. 'And from whence, in theſe caſes, can his *relief* ſo ſurely, and effectually, ſpring, as from the obſequious, obliging, *endearments*, of a diſcreet and virtuous wife? And how much will his inward perturbation be encreaſed, if, from wrath, abuſe, and diſappointment *abroad*, he retires, only to meet with the furies of *hatred*, *inſolence*, and *contradiction* at home?'

It muſt, therefore, be the duty of every wife, to try, by an *engaging addreſs*, and an *officious love*, to *mitigate* the huſband's diſquietudes, to *calm* his temper, and *allay* his paſſions; to receive him after *abſence*, eſpecially when there are viſible appearances of his being uneaſy, and diſcompoſed, with teſtimonies of *peculiar reſpect* and *affection*; to be able, as far as lies in her power, to give him an *agreeable account* of *domeſtic* concerns, and

to

to enliven and raiſe him, by *pleaſing diſcourſe*; for which laſt, ſhe ſhould endeavour to qualify herſelf, to the utmoſt of her ability and circumſtance, both by proper *reading* and *converſation*. This is the moſt likely means, to reduce him to a ſtate of inward *ſerenity* and *peace*, and bind him down to eternal *love*, and *fidelity*.

THERE are other expreſſions of *conjugal* affection, on the part of the *wife*, which are, likewiſe, abſolutely neceſſary——As the being *jealous* of her huſband's *honour*, and ſtudious to preſerve it *clear* and *undiminiſhed*; the being indulgent to his *failings*, and induſtrious to *conceal* them; the being careful of his *health* and *eaſe*, forward to *oblige*, and even to *anticipate* his juſt deſires; to be a ſharer in all his *griefs*, and a lively partaker of the joy of his *proſperity*.

I SHALL only add, that if huſbands can, upon *good* grounds, *claim* this cordial and endearing love, from the perſons, with whom they are linked together, in the firſt and ſtricteſt bond of nature and friendſhip; this neceſſarily implies in it, that they ſhould endeavour to render themſelves *juſt*, and *worthy*, objects of love. And this deſerves, the rather, to be particularly remarked, becauſe the ill conduct of the *huſband* is *oftentimes* (I will not take upon me directly to ſay, that it is for *the moſt part*) the reaſon of indifference, and coldneſs, on the *other ſide*. Before *marriage*, women are flattered to an *extravagance*, and adored, almoſt, to a degree of *idolatry*: This is the *ridiculous* and *ſtupid* cuſtom of the preſent age; which the *ſenſible part*, of the *female ſex* themſelves, muſt, one would think, deſpiſe and nauſeate. But, however they may look upon it as an exceſs; they can never expect, while they believe that there is either *diſcretion*,

cretion, *ſincerity*, or *honour*, in men, that it will ſink, quite down, to the *contrary extreme*.

When therefore they find, that, in a little time after their commencing *wives*, they are ſlighted, deſerted, indifferently, or rudely, treated; that pretended eſteem is ſucceeded by contempt, warm profeſſions, of unalterable tenderneſs, exchanged for coldneſs and inſult, and adoration for haughtineſs and tyranny; can this be a *natural method* of keeping alive, and cheriſhing in their breaſts, the *pure* and *gentle* ſpirit of *conjugal affection?* When the wife is forced to paſs the greateſt part of her time in ſolitude, and the huſband brings home, with him, none but *ſullen rugged* manners, or, at moſt, but a *diſtant*, *formal*, *conſtrained* reſpect; has not this a direct tendency, to produce like returns of *indifference* and *averſion?* It can ſcarce, in nature, be otherwiſe.

I now proceed to diſcourſe of *fidelity*, another branch of conjugal duty, which is unalterably binding on both parties, from *nature*, and in conſequence of a *voluntary mutual ſtipulation*. The *violation* of this duty, in the *firſt* and *chief* inſtance, I have already ſhewn to be an offence of moſt *heinous* and *aggravated* malignity, and attended with moſt *direful* and *pernicious* conſequences. The *outrage*, and violent bold *defiance* of all *juſtice* and *honour*, are ſo obvious to the firſt undepraved ſenſe of nature, that *adultery* is almoſt univerſally branded, with diſtinguiſhed and peculiar infamy. Even the rude and untaught *Indian* bluſhes, and ſtarts, at the thought of a crime, which ſome, pretending to a *refinement* of ſentiment and manners, and even profeſſing *Chriſtianity*, are hardened enough to commit.

Nay,

NAY, many there are, who can, by no means, be ſuſpected, of being too *ſtrict* and *preciſe* in their regard to *moral rules*, and who are ſo far from being *over nice* and *delicate*, in the point of *chaſtity itſelf*, that they can indulge themſelves without reſerve, and without ſhame, in *other* branches of *incontinence*; many of theſe, I ſay, quite *unattached* to virtue, and the *votaries* of impurity and libertiniſm, exclaim with deteſtation againſt, and no doubt feel, oftentimes, ſtrong reſtraints within from, contracting the heavy guilt of *adulterous luſt*. 'And what does this prove, but that *nature* has kindly interpoſed the ſtrongeſt *guards*, againſt the *proſtitution* of the marriage bed; ſuch a ſtain in *itſelf*, ſuch a diſhonour to *families*, ſuch a rending aſunder the moſt ſacred and uſeful *bond*, in all human ſociety; and which can excite no other ſentiments, than thoſe of averſion and abhorrence, in every breaſt, from which all ſeeds of *ingenuity*, together with *religion*, are not quite extirpated.'

I HAVE thought it proper to introduce the ſubject *here*, as I did, more largely, under the head of the *huſband*'s fidelity, with theſe general reflections; that *both ſexes* may be duely alarmed, and have their *indignation*, and *ſcorn*, and *horror*, ſo ſtrongly excited, as to be prepared to repel every *temptation*, to the perpetration of one of the *baſeſt*, moſt *treacherous*, and, I think I may add, moſt *cruel* too, of all immoralities.

BUT, beſides, having ſpecified, in their proper place, the *peculiar* aggravations, that attend this crime on the *huſband*'s ſide, to impreſs *his conſcience* the more powerfully, and engage *his* boaſted ſenſe of *generoſity*, and *honour*, to defend and guard his *fidelity*: I ſhall follow the ſame method in the preſent caſe, and

ſhew

ſhew what the more *ſpecial* aggravations, of an adulterous violation of the marriage tie, are, on the part of the *wife*. Hoping thereby, likewiſe, to fortify that more *ſoft* and *cautious* principle in *her*, that was intended as a *natural barrier*, to protect her *innocence*, and *purity*. And the chief things, which enhance and ſwell the guilt, of ſuch ſhameful *breaches* of conjugal fidelity, in the *female ſex*, are thoſe which follow.

'FIRST, That, as was juſt hinted before, the gracious parent of the whole family of mankind (for both *males*, and *females*, are equally his off-ſpring, and the care of his indulgent providence) that he, I ſay, in the caſe of the *woman*, has been pleaſed to implant, and temper with her very conſtitution, an *ingenuous modeſty*, that is ſhocked at the thought of all indecent *freedoms*, and groſs *impurities*; and particularly *ſhy* and *fearful* (more ſo *here*, than in moſt other reſpects) of any attacks, that may be made, either on her *virgin* chaſtity, or *conjugal* honour. In conſequence of her greater modeſty, nature has alſo endued her, with a more quick and lively ſenſe of *ſhame*. And from this root it is, that ſhe feels more bitter *agonies* of confuſion and remorſe, in the *firſt* proſpect of being *publickly* expoſed, than is generally found to ſpring either from the principle of *honour*, or the paſſion of *ſhame*, in men. Add to this, that theſe, as to their *degree* at leaſt, peculiar ingredients in female natures, are aſſiſted, ſtrengthened, and guarded yet more, by the *manner* of their *education*: Which, when it is careful and prudent, is more *cloſe* and *reſerved*, and more *reſtrained* to all, even the loweſt, points of *decency*, than is, for the moſt part, that of the other ſex.

So that when ſhe wilfully degenerates, into the vile character of an *adultereſs*, ſhe acts not only againſt the general dictates of nature, but againſt the more immediate principles and laws of *her own* conſtitution. She renders herſelf, to a very high degree, infamous, odious to all the virtuous and chaſte of her own ſex, pitied and deſpiſed by the other; and in the eye of God, having broken through all the reſtraints which he kindly provided, to check lawleſs paſſion, and preſerve her purity unſullied, ſhe muſt, doubtleſs, appear, with very *foul* ſtains of *guilt* upon her ſoul.

And it will be no wonder, as this is the point, in which, for the reaſons above-mentioned, it was moſt *unnatural* in her to *err*, if afterwards ſhe be found to deviate, ſtill farther and farther, from the firſt implanted ſentiments, and peculiar impulſes, of her nature, and becomes, in the end, utterly hardened againſt all ſenſe of ſhame. Her native modeſty was intended to be the chief *ornament*, and *lovelineſs* (as it has, indeed, many irreſiſtible charms, and graces, attending it) as well as ordained, for the *defenſe* of her ſexes honour. This ſhe muſt have both inwardly *felt*, and have been convinced of from common experience: And, therefore, when by offering violence to nature, and ſetting all decency at defiance, ſhe breaks through this moſt engaging and powerful tie, the guilt of her *infidelity* muſt be, hereby, greatly heightened, and rendered more black and unpardonable.

'Another aggravation, of the guilt of an *adulterous wife*, differing in kind from thoſe already ſuggeſted, but derived, as they are, from the *particular temperament* of the female ſex, is this; that they are, while uncorrupted, apt to be ſooner *moved*, and more *ſhocked*, at barbarities, at all groſs acts of injuſtice

and outrage.' And having this *ſingular* reſtraint, beſides the *common* principles of humanity, and *ſenſe* of right, is it poſſible for them, without an uncommon naughtineſs and pravity of heart, to be involved in a courſe of the moſt vile and deteſted injuſtice? of complicated injuſtice, injuſtice not only to *ſingle perſons*, but to whole *families*——by alienating *eſtates* from the *right heirs*; confounding *property*; and, by accidental *diſcoveries*, creating *embaraſſment* in the *titles* to eſtates, that have for a long time been *peaceably*, and without *interruption*, poſſeſſed? As theſe *laſt* circumſtances, by which the *innocent* muſt neceſſarily ſuffer, are likely to be, *oftener*, the conſequence of the *wife's* than of the *huſband's* infidelity, they may juſtly be reckoned, another of its heinous and *ſpecial* aggravations.

'LET me add farther, that the injury done, by this particular *offence*, is perhaps, beyond that of *all others* (the caſe of *murder* only excepted) *irreparable*; and that even the *confeſſion*, and *ingenuous acknowledgment*, of it (which, with reſpect to many other injuries, is eſteemed *ſome kind* of reparation; and, where the injurious perſon has no more in its power, may be accepted, by generous minds, as a *ſufficient* reparation:) Even this, I ſay, *here*, will frequently *increaſe*, and *aggravate*, the injury, as it will add to the inconſolable *affliction*, and the piercing *agonies* of grief, which the kind and tender-hearted-huſband feels, by leaving him no poſſible room to *doubt* of his *diſhonour*, nor, conſequently, the leaſt dawning of *hope*, to *palliate*, and relieve, his miſery.'

THESE laſt, indeed, are miſchievous and dreadful circumſtances, attending the crime of adultery *univerſally*; and ought to have the ſame weight to deter the *huſband* from the commiſſion

ſion of it, as the other contracting party in marriage, to whom they have been *directly* repreſented. And it is an undeniable branch of *his* duty, likewiſe, if this capital inſtance of *infidelity* be an unpardonable act of guilt in the *other ſex*, carefully to avoid every thing, that may be an inducement or provocation to it: Every thing, that tends to create an averſion to his *perſon*, all ill uſage, that may gradually extinguiſh *love*, and inſpire deep and ſettled *reſentment*. He ſhould take care, to maintain a *ſtrict watch*, over all his looſe and wandering paſſions, that he may be a bright, and unexceptionable, *example* of *pure uncorrupted* fidelity. For if he violates *his own* ſolemn tie (though GOD may be righteouſly diſpleaſed, and will, doubtleſs, ſeverely *puniſh*, and the world may juſtly *cenſure*, the *like* inſtance of *corruption* in the *wife*) yet *he himſelf*, without being quite *impudent* in vice, in exceſſes of moſt unbridled and licentious vice, cannot think that he has any *right* to *complain*.

'BUT let him guard, with the whole collected force of his reaſon, againſt the ſin and torment of *cauſeleſs jealouſy*, ordained, by the wiſe author of nature, to be a perpetual *puniſhment* to *itſelf*; becauſe it is a *ſeed*, *fruitful* of every thing miſchievous, and of irreconcileable diſcord.——A paſſion, *weak*, *ungenerous*, and *unmanly*, in itſelf; the utmoſt *diſhonour* and *injury*, that can poſſibly be offered to an *innocent* and *faithful* wife; and which may prompt ſome of *impetuous* tempers, and not duly influenced by principles of *virtue* and *religion*, to meditate ſuch wild ſchemes of *revenge*, as, in all probability, *no other* inordinate paſſion would ever have engaged them in.' It is, therefore, a wiſe caution, which is given by the ſon of *Syrac*, in the book of *Eccleſiaſticus** ——*Be not jealous over the*

* Eccluſ. ix. 1.

wife of thy bosom, and teach her not an evil lesson against thyself.

But let me remark here, before I conclude this head, that the passage, just cited, was only designed to intimate, what may be, *in fact*, the *fatal consequence* of groundless *jealousy*; but not in the least to *vindicate*, or *excuse*, such extravagant and unnatural *resentment* in the *wife*, for any *abuse*, or *wrong*, which she may have *unjustly* suffered: For though another *fails* in *his* duty, *mine* is still inviolable. Much less, can his doing me, a *lesser* injury, *justify* my being hurried on, by an ungoverned transport, to the commission of a *greater*. 'Upon altogether as *reasonable* a ground, may *defamation*, and *slander*, provoke to *fraud*, and *robbery*, or a violent *assault* upon my person, though without actual mischief, to premeditated *murder* itself; ——as *jealousy* can urge to *adultery*.'

The Fourth head, according to the division and arrangement, which I have made of the duty of *wives*, is *frugality*, and *prudence*. I have joined these two together, because '*frugality* in *domestic* affairs, and especially in *personal* expences, is one of the chief and most eminent instances of *prudence*, in a wife.'

And, here, the *general rule* for her conduct is, that all concerns, in which she may have the immediate *direction*, be managed with *decency*, without unnecessary *profuseness*; that she may do proper honour to the *husband*, and to *herself*, without squandering away the *family substance*. Now in order to her discharging, rightly, this part of her duty, it is, I think, absolutely necessary, that the *wife* be not immoderately fond of *publick entertainments*; in which, too much of that *precious*

cious time, which is the preparatory term allotted for *eternity*, is at beſt *unprofitably* ſpent, with very little improvement in any qualities, that are truly *valuable*, and to the neglect of more *important* concerns. Nor ſhould ſhe, if ſhe would ſupport the character of a frugal and prudent wife, affect to ſhew an oſtentation *beyond* her rank, nor *emulate* perſons in *higher* circumſtances; in whom the very ſame expence, that is *extravagance* in her, may be a reaſonable and juſt *oeconomy*. And ſuch conduct will, in all probability, defeat the end, which ſhe herſelf may *aim* at. For the world is apt to be *cenſorious*, and much more inclined to be *impertinently* inquiſitive about the affairs of other people, than to *attend* to their own, and will therefore *ſecretly* deſpiſe what, they imagine, to be an indiſcreet and exceſſive *oſtentation*, however they may admire, applaud, and encourage, it in *public*.

In this indeed, as well as in almoſt all other inſtances, none but *general* directions can be laid down, without a tedious and endleſs prolixity. Both *huſbands*, and *wives*, muſt be left, to their own conſciences and honour, to make the minute, and direct, *application* to particular caſes. I chooſe, therefore, to mention but one *ſpecial* caſe, which I think of importance, and highly worthy of regard, which is this----- 'that it ſeems, to me, to be utterly inconſiſtent with the due *frugality* and *prudence* of a *wife*, to embezzle *clandeſtinely*, and *gradually*, any part of the family ſtock for her own *private* purpoſes of *eaſe*, *gratification*, or *ſplendor*----*preſent*, or *future*: And that, by this, ſhe may imperceptibly *embarraſs* the *huſband*'s affairs, and ſchemes for their *common* good, and greatly *hurt* the intereſt of the *family* in general. Beſides, that, if it be once *diſcovered*, it has a certain tendency to deſtroy mutual *confidence*, and beget *jealouſies*, and a notion of

ſeparate

ſeparate intereſts, with which mutual cordial love is impoſſible to be reconciled.'

But let me add here, that if the *huſband* would engage the *wife*, to a punctual and exact diſcharge of this part of *her* duty, there are requirements of *prudence*, indiſpenſable on *his* ſide likewiſe. He himſelf muſt be an example of *frugality*. He muſt not aſſume the ſole right to be *profuſe*, and purſue extravagant pleaſures. He muſt, in proportion to his circumſtances, be of a *generous*, and not of a *niggardly* and *churliſh*, diſpoſition. He muſt gratify his wife in all *reaſonable* deſires, with reſpect to elegancies and conveniencies, as well as to the bare neceſſaries, of her ſtation. Otherwiſe, there is ground to fear, that women, who are denied what is really *proper* and *fit*, from the general inclination, that diſcovers itſelf in human nature, to run from one *extreme* to *another*, will be induced to contract ſuch habits of *negligence* at leaſt, if not of *profuſeneſs*, as might have been entirely prevented, by juſt and reaſonable acts of generoſity in their huſbands.

But, beſides frugality, there are *other* branches of *prudence* neceſſary in a wife, for her own honour, and the due regulation of family government. And theſe are-----' the right management of *domeſtic* affairs; the aſſigning to every member of the family, more directly under her *care*, its proper *offices*; the preſerving, always, the appearance of *cleanlineſs*, *order*, *decency*; the providing, as much as is poſſible, for accidental *viſits*, and that the friends of the huſband, or thoſe, to whom he is obliged in point of intereſt, may not be received with any viſible marks of *diſturbance*, *hurry*, and *confuſion*; and the not being too much from *home*, on occaſions of *curioſity*, *amuſement*, or *ceremony*.'——

By

By which, the wife muſt, of neceſſity, be *ignorant* of what is neceſſary to be conſulted, and attended to, within her own *ſphere* of government, and the *family*, without a *head*, muſt be left to the full ſwing of their own depraved, and irregular, inclinations.

OTHER neceſſary acts of *prudence* are-----conſulting the huſband's *temper*, and endeavouring to accommodate, within the bounds of religion and innocence, her own *behaviour* and *manners* to it; the avoiding all *returns* of paſſion, pouring oil on the flame, inſtead of raiſing it to a greater height; maintaining a ſteady equal temper, affability and complaiſance without *flattery*, or any extravagant tranſports of affection, that may look like *artifice* and *deſign*; nor affecting frights, unuſual agonies and convulſions of grief, which, when once diſcovered to be only *feigned*, may raiſe a high diſguſt, and utterly alienate the huſband's love; and, finally, the never *upbraiding* him, if that ſhould be really the caſe, with the meanneſs of his *extraction*, or the inferiority of his *fortune*: For this will moſt ſurely exaſperate, and inflame, little differences, into open animoſity and variance, as *pride*, and *ſelf-love*, are two of the moſt predominant principles, in all mankind.

BUT let the *huſband*, on the other hand, in order to ſecure this deſireable ſtate of things, avoid, on *his part*, arrogance and tyranny, and inſolence of paſſion. Let him not forget the obligations of *ingenuity*, and *gratitude*, which he is laid under to the wife, who, by entruſting him with a fortune ſuperior to his own, has raiſed him from a meaner rank in life. Let him take care, that the *company*, which he introduces to his wife, be, at leaſt, ſuch in the general, as know how to confine themſelves, within

within the bounds of *decency* and *diſcretion:* For a woman muſt be of a firm, and inflexible, diſpoſition indeed, if ſhe ſhews no *ſign* of *diſcontent* and *offence*, at the *immodeſt*, *rude*, converſation of rakes and libertines. And, to ſum up all, let him manage all his affairs with diſcretion, and without intricacy and diſorder, or *he* can have no reaſon to expect, and has no right to demand, regularity and exactneſs in the female adminiſtration.

THE duty of a *wife* is, indeed, ſtill the *ſame*, though not the fair and conſiſtent *claim* of the *huſband:* And if, notwithſtanding his exceptionable conduct, ſhe honourably ſuſtains her character, and diſcharges the proper obligations of it, ſhe will be that *virtuous woman*, deſcribed by *Solomon*, in the laſt chapter of the book of *Proverbs*,-----whoſe *price is above rubies. The heart of her huſband doth*, ſafely, *truſt in her, ſo that he ſhall have no need of ſpoil. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She ſeeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She ſtretcheth out her hand to the poor*, yea, *ſhe reacheth forth her hands to the needy. Her huſband is known in the gates, when he ſitteth among the elders of the land. Strength and honour are her cloathing. She openeth her mouth with wiſdom, and, in her tongue, is the law of kindneſs. She looketh well to the ways of her houſehold, and eateth not the bread of idleneſs. She is not afraid of the ſnow for her houſehold: For all her houſehold are cloathed with ſcarlet. She maketh herſelf coverings of tapeſtry, her cloathing is ſilk, and purple. Her children ariſe up, and call her bleſſed: Her huſband* alſo, *and he praiſeth her*-----Such a *prudent wife is* a portion *from the* LORD *.

* Prov. xix. 14.

To

To *meekneſs*, as it ſtands oppoſed to brawling, and a ſpirit of contention, to paſſion, arrogance, and a reſtleſs impetuoſity of temper, I need ſay but little; becauſe, that this is a moſt decent, honourable, indiſpenſable, qualification of a *good wife*, will be univerſally admitted; nor will *ſhe herſelf*, I am perſuaded, venture to diſpute, directly, the *propriety* of *this part* of her character. And it muſt, likewiſe, be her *intereſt*, to cultivate this virtue to its utmoſt heighth, both to *preſerve* the affection of her huſband, or, if it be *deficient*, to *reſtore* it. 'Nothing has ſo certain an effect to bend the *ſtubborn*, ſoften the *obdurate*, and cool down the *inflexible* and *violent* temper.'

And as to the *education* of children, which is often introduced amongſt the *offices* of *huſbands* and *wives*, I chooſe entirely to omit it here; becauſe it more properly belongs to the *duty* of *parents*, hereafter to be conſidered.

Nothing, therefore, remains now to be inſiſted on, according to the order, in which I propoſed to treat this ſubject, but *modeſty*. By which, I not only mean *modeſt diſcourſe*, and *modeſt carriage*; 'but *moderation*, in outward *magnificence*, *dreſs*, *equipage*:' Which was thought of ſo much importance, by the firſt preachers of *Chriſtianity*, that two, of the moſt *eminent Apoſtles* of our Lord, have expreſsly recommended and enforced it, in the following paſſages. The firſt is in the writings of St. *Paul*, where he adviſes —— *that women adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel, with ſhamefacedneſs and ſobriety; not with broidered hair, or pearls, or coſtly array; but* (that *which become women profeſſing godlineſs*) *with good works* *. St. *Peter* directs to the ſame purpoſe,

* 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

in an exhortation immediately addreſſed to *wives*—*Whoſe adorning*, ſays he, *let it not be that outward* adorning *of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But* let it be *the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible*— †.

And becauſe theſe exhortations, with others of a like nature, tending to reſtrain *vanity* and *luxury*, may be repreſented as the effects of a *ſtiff* and *ill-bred enthuſiaſm*, and raiſe, in the minds of the gay part of men and women, a ſtrong *prejudice* againſt the *Chriſtian* religion itſelf; I think it neceſſary, to prevent a conſequence, that is likely to prove ſo fatal to religion in general, to attempt a brief *explanation* of the *rules* here laid down; and to ſhew, particularly, the *end*, which they were intended to ſerve; their true *meaning*; their *limitations*; their *exceſſes*.

It was the great deſign of *Chriſtianity*, to *refine* and *embelliſh* human nature, and raiſe it to the higheſt pitch of real *beauty* and *dignity*. In order to which, it muſt firſt be ſtripped of all *falſe ornaments*, which corrupt paſſion, and pride, and depraved ſentiments of what is truely polite and amiable, have introduced under various unnatural forms; to the ſinking mankind far beneath their proper *ſtation*, and *rank* in the creation. And when this *rubbiſh* is happily removed, then, and then alone, will there be a proper foundation for a *ſuperſtructure* of a *different* kind; not the fabric of fancy, or of blind and corrupted appetite, but the product of wiſdom, and right diſpoſitions.

This remark, as to the grand intention, and natural influence, of the *Chriſtian* doctrine, will be found to hold true univerſally,

† 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

in

in every *application*, that can poſſibly be made of it, to the condition and ſtate of human nature. And it is with this view, that the Apoſtles of *Chriſt*, before-cited, have enforced the argument, in particular, with reſpect to *that ſex*, which was intended, by the God of nature, to be the moſt engaging and attractive object, in this viſible part of his creation; 'by pointing out to them, what are their trueſt and moſt ſhining decorations, which will add a *luſtre*, at the ſame time that they are infinitely *ſuperior* in *worth*, to all the caſual, fleeting, withering, graces of outward *form* and *perſon*; and expoſing, at the ſame time, the little arts of *vanity* and *oſtentation*, which are ſuch *trifles* in the ſcale of *reaſon*, that they cannot ſo much as *palliate* their real inward defects. This is, indeed, the great point to be conſidered: Becauſe till ſuch vanities are, in a good meaſure, rooted out of the *heart*, and the *affections*, ſubſtantial *ornaments* will never recommend themſelves. But, on the other hand, it is highly probable, that, in proportion, as women *diſengage* themſelves from a *weak devotedneſs* to novelty, variety, and external ſhew of magnificence, they will be more *ſtudious* to *improve* in the inward graces of the mind.'

To which let me add, that in explaining theſe, and all other directions of a parallel kind, there is great danger of two *extremes*. The one is, that of a too literal and rigid interpretation——as if ſplendor, and ſumptuouſneſs, of dreſs, was *abſolutely*, and upon *all occaſions*, unlawful. The next is a more common, and a much more dangerous, exceſs——by which giddy minds, not uſed to reflection, or to fix the ſtrict meaſures of right and wrong, upon being allowed *any* alleviations and exceptions at all, go on *relaxing*, and *excepting*, till they *evacuate* the *whole* ſubſtance of the prohibition.——Admit only, that richneſs, and magnificence, of

dreſs is *ever* expedient, and juſtifiable, this, with them, is much the ſame, as breaking down *all fences*, and giving an *unreſtrained licence* to profuſeneſs, and luxury. Thus, then, the general *end* of the Apoſtolic directions, which I am now defending, appears to be, in itſelf, *wiſe* and *fit*, and highly *honourable* to both ſexes: The next thing to be enquired into is, what is their true *ſenſe* and *import*.

And, in general, it can by no means be juſtly ſuppoſed, that the things, which theſe two Apoſtles have particularly mentioned, are *univerſally* and *abſolutely* forbidden. For what is there, that can render the wearing of *gold* more criminal *in itſelf*, than the wearing of *braſs*; or ornaments of *jewels*, than ſtrings of *pebbles*, and the *Indian* magnificence of *ſhells* and *feathers*? As to matter, and form, and figure, they are *all* equally *indifferent*, and deſigned, by the maker of the world, to be ſubſervient to the *uſes* and *purpoſes* of man. And where *baſer metals* are preferred to gold, and *glaſs* to ſtones, which, we may abſurdly rate at an ineſtimable price, only on account of their being ſcarcer, and of a more ſhining luſtre; there the prohibition, regulating the *exceſs* of vanity, would have moſt wiſely run in a *contrary* ſtrain; for example thus——'Whoſe *adorning*, *let it not be the wearing of* lead, *nor the outward adorning*, *of* ſhaving the head, [*inſtead of* plaiting the hair] ſhould that have been fixed upon by fancy, which is infinitely wild, as the *high taſte* of *pride*, and *luxurious politeneſs*.'

This is a demonſtration, that, in plain abſtracted reaſon, all theſe things are upon a *level*, either the uſe of *all*, or of *none*, abſolutely unlawful. But whatever there is amiſs, and unbecoming women *profeſſing godlineſs*, in *adorning* themſelves in the manner

ner expreſsly cenſured, muſt ariſe entirely from *circumſtances*—— from the *indecency* of ſuch dreſs in the *wearer*, and the corrupt *diſpoſitions*, and *paſſions*, that accompany it. And, even here, it muſt be conſidered, whether the evil temper, and the corrupt paſſions, ſpring *directly*, and neceſſarily, from the *things themſelves* which are uſed as ornaments, or from *other cauſes:* If the abuſe be merely *accidental*, it is not only what *indifferent* objects, but what even the very *beſt*, are liable to.

And that what, I have now ſtated, is the real truth of the caſe, is evident from this ſingle conſideration, that though, the more *ſumptuous* and *expenſive* the modiſh *dreſs* is, it will upon the whole (eſpecially, while there remains that *unnatural affectation* of appearing all upon a level, notwithſtanding the difference of ranks and ſtations, which the providence of God, and the inſtitutions of civil ſociety, have wiſely ordained) though, I ſay, this more ſumptous and expenſive dreſs muſt be attended with more *pernicious* conſequences upon *the whole*; yet this is not, in the leaſt, derived from the *nature* and *quality* of the ſeveral ornaments themſelves, but from the *value*, which imagination and vanity have *arbitrarily* ſet upon them. 'For if the utmoſt *plainneſs* and *ſimplicity*, in dreſs, were the heighth of *faſhionable* ornament and elegance; in this *grave* and *modeſt* dreſs, as it may now ſeem (and, I doubt not, but upon ſomewhat of a right foundation in nature too) the *danger* to *virtue*, and the *indecent emulation*, in *wives* profeſſing *Chriſtianity*, would ultimately *center*.' Only, let *good* wives, and *Chriſtian* wives, profeſſing the doctrine that is according to godlineſs, frugality, and moderation (beſides comporting themſelves within the limits of the invariable rules, which I ſhall preſently propoſe) never affect to be among the *firſt* in alterations of faſhion; nor carry their *emulation*, where they may

may think themſelves obliged, in decency, to follow cuſtom, to the *utmoſt length*. Let them imitate the *reaſonable*, and not the *fantaſtical*; the *modeſt*, and not the *arrogant*. And of the reaſonable and modeſt, let their *imitation* be *ſtrictly* confined, to the *proprieties* of their own *character*, and *degree* in life.

We may add to all this, that the wearing of *gold*, and the putting on *coſtly apparel*, is not only not unlawful and criminal in itſelf, but may upon ſome occaſions, and with reſpect to ſome ſtations, be expedient, and in a manner neceſſary. The wiſe author of nature has plainly appointed various orders, and ſubordinations, of human life; and of *theſe*, difference in *habit* is one juſt *outward diſtinction*: And the particular poſts and offices in ſociety, which ſome ſuſtain, may require an *appearance* and *ſhew* of magnificence. And it would ſeem ridiculous to almoſt every one, and be indeed, in ſome meaſure abſurd, in itſelf, if all ſhould dreſs either with the ſame *ſumptuouſneſs*, or with equal *ſimplicity*.

Besides there are many other expreſſions, and exhortations, of a like kind with thoſe, which I am now conſidering, where the ſenſe neither *is*, nor can *poſſibly be*, *abſolute*, but muſt be *comparative* only. Thus, for example,——*love not the world, neither the things that are in the world* *——*Lay not up, for yourſelves, treaſures upon earth, but lay up, for yourſelves, treaſures in heaven* †——*Labour not for the meat, that periſheth, but for that meat, which endureth unto everlaſting life* ‡——In all theſe paſſages, to ſuppoſe the things, which *Chriſtians* are cautioned againſt, to be *condemned* in *every degree*, muſt root out natural affection,

* 1 John ii. 15. † Matth. vi. 19, 20. ‡ John vi. 27.

and

and friendſhip, and introduce idleneſs, and beggary, and general wretchedneſs, and confuſion.

And, therefore, *lay not up, for yourſelves, treaſures on earth*, can mean no more than——'Regard and purſue not theſe uncertain and periſhing enjoyments, as your *higheſt* and moſt *ſubſtantial* treaſure:' *Love not the world*, can denote nothing further than this——'Let not your affections be *immoderately*, and *chiefly*, fixed on outward temporary objects:' And we fully comply with our Saviour's advice, not to *labour for the meat that periſheth*——'when we are *ultimately intent* on providing, and ſecuring, that *food* of *knowledge* and *good diſpoſitions*, which will continue to *nouriſh*, *ſtrengthen*, and *improve* the *ſoul*, to all eternity; and when the *other*, in *compariſon* of this infinitely greater and more momentous concern, is *contemned* and *neglected*.'

And thus alſo, when it is urged upon *wives*, by Apoſtolical authority, not to let their *adorning* be the *outward adorning*, of *plaiting the hair*, of *wearing of gold*, and *putting on of apparel*, it is natural to underſtand it thus, by an evident parity of reaſon—their *principal* adorning. For ſcarce, in any caſe, can we imagine, that a prohibition is *abſolute*, and will admit of no *exception*, but where the practice forbidden is, in *its own* nature, *evil*, and *unwarrantable*.

But though the *Chriſtian* directions, upon this head, ſhould be allowed not to amount, to a ſtrict and total prohibition, there muſt doubtleſs be *ſome inſtances of exceſs*, to which they more *directly*, and *ſpecially*, refer: Otherwiſe, they ſignify juſt *nothing* at all, and can have neither *weight*, nor *propriety*, in them. And what

what *theſe* inſtances *are*, is the only queſtion that remains to be determined.

And, First, 'All ſuch *coſt*, and *gaudineſs* of dreſs, muſt be *for ever* condemned, which *miniſters* to *pride*, and *vanity*: I mean not, barely as a *temptation*: for *ſuch*, things the moſt innocent, nay the moſt praiſe-worthy and honourable, may *accidentally* prove; but which *taints* and *corrupts* the heart, by *actually producing* theſe degenerate and baſe habits.' Should it be alleged, that, ſtill, the *fault* is *not* in the *dreſs*, but in the *wearer*: I admit, that, abſolutely conſidered, it is not; but, yet, none can with juſtice deny, that (though the *right* uſe of it be lawful) the *perverting* it to purpoſes of *vice*, and ſinful *arrogance*, muſt be always criminal. What, I have now repreſented, may be ſtiled, in other terms, the *pride of dreſs*; and, under that denomination, there can be no objection againſt its being ſeverely, and equally, condemned, both by *Chriſtianity*, and *reaſon*.

And the certain *marks*, and *characters*, of this exceſs are—— when *wives* imagine, that there is a *real honour*, and *merit*, in dreſs; that their *profuſeneſs*, or *elegance*, gives them a *preheminence* above thoſe, who are *leſs* ſplendidly and modiſhly adorned; when they expect, without any qualities that are truely *worthy* and *amiable*, to be admired and applauded, on this *ſingle* account; and are apt to treat, with *contempt* and *ſcorn*, thoſe that want the ſame outward, inſignificant, trifling, *glare* of *artificial* and *ſpurious* ornaments.——This is one of the moſt *low* and *unnatural* kinds of pride, that can poſſibly actuate a human breaſt: It confounds the eternal difference of things, and is utterly inconſiſtent with *reaſon*, *virtue*, and *decency*.

Another

ANOTHER extreme is, 'when such *attention* is given to these superficial exterior decorations, as diverts wives from a discharge of their indispensable *duties*, from a regard to those necessary *domestic offices*, without which, it is absolutely impossible, that they should be either good *wives*, or good *Christians*; and when, a much *larger proportion*, of that valuable and precious *time*, which ought to be devoted to the prudent and religious *education* of *children*, and the proper *regulation* of *servants*, is *misspent* in ornaments of extravagance and luxury, than such *unprofitable* and *trifling* articles can justly demand.' This, instead of attracting real esteem, must be a character, both despicable, and odious. Wives are, by such conduct, *corrupted*, and *hindered* in the great *concern* of life; and husbands *injured*, and *dishonoured*.

AGAIN, '*immodest* dress, or such as feeds impurity, and administers fuel to loose desires, must, always, be indecent and inexcusable.' Modesty, and shame, are indeed, in particular instances, sometimes *directed*, and, in a great measure *determined*, by the *peculiar customs*, and *sentiments*, that have been long established, in the several countries and ages of the world. But, notwithstanding this, *modesty itself*, and *reluctance*, and *shame*, at the thought of things really *indecent*, and *unbecoming*, are *eternal* principles, springing from the right constitution, and order, of human nature. There is, without doubt, a modesty and immodesty in *dress*, as well as in *discourse*, and the general course of *conduct*: And I will venture to charge, with being *immodest*, all such attire, as is both *adapted*, and *intended*, to ensnare, and captivate; to raise general admiration; and engage wanton licentious appetite.

'THIS, by many antient commentators, is ſuppoſed to be the chief reaſon, why St. *Peter* particularly ſpeaks of *plaiting the hair*, and of *wearing of gold*; becauſe this was, in *his time*, the affected *diſtinction* of *wanton lewd* women, who had renounced the natural reſerve, and modeſty, of their ſex.' And I ſhould be ſorry, if the *female dreſs*, in *this age*, bears any conſiderable *reſemblance* to this. Where it does, women of a good underſtanding, and of genteel accompliſhments, will eaſily find a way of avoiding the *exceſs*, without appearing, upon the whole, *unpolite*, or *inelegant*. And others will, I hope, be perſwaded to preſerve their *decency*, and *Chriſtianity*, unſpotted, though they ſhould loſe ſome part of their character, with reſpect to *exactneſs* in *ſuperfluous* and *faſhionable trifles*.

FURTHER, that dreſs may be juſtly deemed *extravagant*, which hinders the *wife*, from performing thoſe neceſſary acts of *charity* and *goodneſs*, which may be expected from one of her character and ſtation; which prevents her *adorning* herſelf with works of beneficence, the chief grace and dignity of human nature, in all circumſtances, and all conditions; which is claimed as the *chief female* embelliſhment, and preferred to real and durable excellence: And, in the LAST place, all *ſplendor* and *magnificence*, that is beyond the *quality* of the wearer; which is both a ſhameful *extreme* in itſelf, and tends to *poverty*, and *miſery*. Wives may be, here, apt to plead the general *cuſtom*, amongſt perſons of their *own rank*: But will the exceſſes of *another* juſtify, or even excuſe, *my* exceſſes? Not in the leaſt: For if this be allowed, it muſt open a door for univerſal uncontrouled licentiouſneſs; and there will be an utter end of all moderation, honour, virtue, in *both ſexes*, and in every degree of human life.

THUS

THUS have I offered ſome brief thoughts, upon a ſubject, perhaps, *new* to the generality, and probably, by them, entirely *unexamined*; but which, I myſelf muſt think of *importance*, while I profeſs myſelf to be a *Chriſtian*; becauſe the inſpired Apoſtles of our Lord have particularly urged, and enforced it. Nay, I muſt look upon it as a point of great conſequence, as I am a *man*, and a well-wiſher to the *purity*, and *dignity*, of my own kind. *Vanity*, whether in dreſs, or in any other article, when it is once admitted, *dilates*, and *ſpreads* itſelf; and, in the end, it *occupies* the whole ſoul, and greatly *debaſes* it. 'Nor has any thing had ſo *fatal* an effect, to root out *Chriſtianity*, and a *ſerious ſenſe* of all true religion, as the *tyranny* of *cuſtom*, and the *meanneſs* and *puſilanimity*, of conſenting to be *enſlaved* by it.'

CHAP. IV.

Some obſervations on the true ground *of the duty of* parents *towards their children, and on its* general nature, *and* offices.

THE authority, of Parents, is one of the greateſt and moſt important *truſts*, that the ſovereign wiſdom, of the eternal parent of the univerſe, has thought fit to veſt in mankind. And, therefore, the *right execution* of this truſt, by a conſcientious performance of every part of parental duty, may juſtly be ranked among the chief obligations of religion; among the firſt, in order of nature, and the moſt diffuſive, and momentous, in their conſequences. It is that fundamental tie, on which public morality, honour, and ſociety, in a great meaſure depend; and the ends of GOD's government are *inſtrumentally ſubſerved*, and promoted by it, with greater *viſible effect*, than they are, or perhaps can be, by any other ſingle branch of conduct, within the whole ſcope of ſocial morality. If this, upon enquiry, holds true, it muſt powerfully enforce, the *parent's* duty, upon his reaſon, conſcience, ſenſe of true intereſt; and upon every religious, generous, and wiſe principle, that was at firſt implanted, or can poſſibly take place, in his nature. And that nothing has, here, been exaggerated, the common reflections of his own underſtanding will convince him, and experience, and obſervation, will confirm.

FROM

FROM the tender care of *parents* (as the world was firſt conſtituted, and is at preſent, generally, conducted) the very *continuance* of the race of mankind, and the *ſucceſſive propagation* of human nature, ſpring. And by their neglect, and unnatural cruelty, they may not only be the *deſtroyers* of their own *immediate off-ſpring*; but (if all univerſally concurred in this remorſeleſs and barbarous ſcheme) in a degree ſhocking to thought, the *murderers* of a *whole ſpecies*; derived from an infinitely higher original, and the intelligent ſubjects of his *paternal* government. For if children were not entirely and publicly *deſerted*, but barely *treated* with that *ſecret* diſregard, and thoſe, for the moſt part, *undiſcoverable* neglects and ſavage inhumanities, which *civil laws* could ſeldom *puniſh*, nor conſequently *reſtrain*, an age, or two, might almoſt *depopulate* the world: And if *one* ſuch inſtance be allowable, *every* inſtance, of the ſame kind, muſt be allowed. The provident care, therefore, of parents for their children, in the *firſt irrational*, and abſolutely *defenceleſs*, ſtage of human life, is hereby proved, beyond all exception, to be an inviolable law of nature, and one of its wiſeſt, and moſt important, inſtitutions.

IF we riſe higher, to the ſtage when *reaſon* begins to *open*, when *conſcience*, and the *firſt dawning ſenſe* of *morality* diſcovers itſelf, in *children*; of ſtill greater moment, will the right diſcharge, of the *parents* duty, appear to be: Becauſe this is the ſcene for *nurturing* the underſtanding, and laying the *foundation* of good and uſeful manners; which is to the *perſon himſelf*, who is committed to our charge and cultivation, and may oftentimes be to the *public*, of infinitely higher concern, than the mere preſervation of his animal life.

'DETEST-

'DETESTABLE and monſtrous, as the *deſtruction* of our *own off-ſpring* may appear, both in the ſight of GOD, and man, the training them up, by a groſs wilful *failure* in the diſcharge of our parental duty, in *ignorance* and *vice*, to the *corruption*, *infamy*, and eternal *ruin* of the ſoul, is to be the *inſtrument* of their far greater infelicity, both in its nature, and duration; as it is, in itſelf, much better *not to be*, than to be *depraved* and *degenerate*, and *eſtranged* from the very *deſire*, as well as the neceſſary *temper*, of true happineſs.'

THE proper maturity, therefore, of reaſon in *children*, the juſt formation of their morals, their honour and uſefulneſs, their preſent comfort, and welfare throughout the whole of their immortal being, depending, in ſo great a degree, on *parents* fulfilling the *obligations* of their *ſtation* and *character*; their *duty* muſt, of neceſſity, be as ſtrict, as indiſpenſable, and momentous, as the authority of GOD, the ſtrongeſt enforcements of *nature*, and the intereſts of *both worlds*, can make it.

'AND if the *laws* of human ſociety could, generally, take *cognizance* of ſuch caſes as theſe, which are offices of duty (and, in conſequence of this, the omiſſions likewiſe are) of a more *private* nature, than to be *aſcertained*, and diſtinctly *ſtated*, with all their meritorious, or aggravating, circumſtances: But if, I ſay, they could, on *both* ſides, be fixed and proved with *certainty*, no virtue could deſerve better, and very few in an equal degree, *public* encouragement and reward; nor any crime be, more fitly, the ſubject of *civil* penalties.' And it is moſt reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the ſupreme diſpenſer of juſtice, as, in the preſent caſe it is hardly poſſible, that there ſhould be an equitable diſtribution

bution *here*, will take care to distinguish, the more remarkably both the *virtue*, and the *offence*, by suitable tokens of his favour, or displeasure, *hereafter*.

To illustrate, yet further, the general weight and influence of the duty of *parents*, let it be considered, that the obligations of *children* arise chiefly, I might almost say, entirely, from their *first* discharging, at least in the greater and more essential instances, *their natural* obligations. Of this, a few easy reflexions, upon the subject, will soon convince us.

'My parent, I allow, to be the *instrument*, or *secondary cause*, of my being. Let me then examine, whether *any*, or *what degree* of, filial duty results from this one *single* circumstance, abstracting from all *other* motives. If, in this instrumentality, he *intended* only the *gratification* of his own private desires, it was so far a *selfish*, and not a *benevolent*, purpose, and can, in its own nature, claim no returns of *gratitude*. And if he designed it for my *benefit*, which I look upon as the only true ground of my *reciprocal* obligation, this must appear from other, more *certain*, proofs. The mere derivation of *existence* may either be a *benefit*, or a most heavy deplorable *infelicity*, as *proper*, or *no*, provision at all is made, for the comfortable *support* of it, and as its *first* opening prospects, and manners, are *directed*.'

'But the *parent*, we will suppose, *cherishes* his child with an affectionate indulgent care, and with all the circumspection and assiduity that nature requires, in his infirm helpless state of *infancy*; assists and cherishes his *understanding*, in its tender growth does; his utmost, according to his ability, to inculcate and impress *religious principles*, and raise, in his mind, *right moral*

ral sentiments, besides providing for him, the necessary nutriment, and accommodation, suited to his rank: And this conduct, most certainly, constitutes an indispensable tie of *duty*, on the *child*'s part. But does not the obligation result, almost, from *this alone?* Is it at all derived, from the *instrumental* communication of being? From the *involuntary*, *unintentional*, and merely *casual*, communication of an *eligible* and *happy* being? No: Most certain it is, and self-evident, that parents can properly demand no reverence, no gratitude, or honour, upon this account only; and that the *bare* relation of a parent, disclaiming the proper offices and duties of a parent, is a relation quite *unnatural*, and can, therefore, never be justly assigned, as the ground of natures *filial*, *mutual*, and *corresponding*, laws.'

'THE *father*, without *my* consent, *forced* me into existence; in my infant state, when the laws of my country *restrained* him, by the *fear* of capital punishment, from being my destroyer, and murderer, he still treated me, with an utter *insensibility* to the most sacred ties, and instincts, of natural affection, and afforded me no *relief*, or *comfort*, but what was necessary to support a *miserable* being: He utterly neglected my *education*, and denied me the *conveniencies*, suited to his character and rank in life: He *discarded* me, for no other reason, but that of getting rid of a burden on his *fortune*, and a clog to his *luxury*.——In this extremity, *another*, moved by compassion and generosity of mind, *adopted* me, and discharged all the offices of the *real*, *natural*, parent.'

'TO *which* then am I, in *right*, or in *nature*, obliged? To *which* am I, in *competition* and *preference*, obliged? To him, to whom I *owe* nothing, and against whom, I can *charge* cruelty, and

and a violation of my native rights? Or to the *other*, to whom I was originally linked in no relation, but as man to man; from whom, however, I have received entirely *diſintereſted*, and *unmerited*, favours? The latter, the reaſon of all mankind will acknowledge, to be the parent juſtly *revered*, *honoured*, and *obeyed*.' God himſelf would not be ſerved from *love*, and an ingenuous ſenſe of *duty*, were he the *like* unaffectionate, and unnatural, father of the intelligent creation, with the character before deſcribed; however he might be ſlaviſhly complimented, and patiently ſubmitted to, as the ſupreme and irreſiſtible *power*. And all this is the ſtrongeſt, general, enforcement of the *duty* of *parents* in every branch of it, from nature, right, and intereſt.

I beg leave to ſubjoin one general remark more, and that is, that *parental* government is, or ought to be, from its *peculiar character*, as well as from the *ultimate deſign* of it, the moſt eaſy, mild, and gracious of all others. Oppreſſion, and tyranny, are *contradictions* to its very nature. And the *exceſs* it rather inclines to, where the warmeſt affections and propenſities of nature are cheriſhed, and indulged, is that of a too great *ſoftneſs*, and *relaxation* of *authority*. 'The parent, in common, is much more likely to drop the *reaſon*, than the *benevolence*, and *tender feelings*, of a man.' And though this, in particular inſtances, may be very wrong, and attended with injurious and fatal conſequences, yet it plainly ſhews us, to what kind of behaviour, the character of parent leads upon the *whole*: And that the general direction and bias of *nature*, in the exerciſe of parental power, is to clemency, and not to rigour.

BUT, then, it is proper to be remarked, that what has been, before ſaid, cannot imply in it, that parents ſhould impoſe no *reſtraints*, that may *accidentally* raiſe even a violent reſentment, in children of a perverſe and irreclaimable temper; but only, that they be careful not to give *juſt cauſe* of provocation, and complaint, by an undeſerved ill treatment. For the *ſtubborn* will be apt to complain, if all their wild and fantaſtical humours are not fully gratified: The *vain*, if they are limited, and circumſcribed, in any article of their profuſeneſs, and oſtentation: The *licentious*, if they are controuled in their extravagancies of pleaſure, and luxury——But, notwithſtanding this, it is the parent's duty to be reſolute and inflexible, and not to *relax* the *leaſt point* of his natural, and rightful, authority; becauſe the honour of children, and their happineſs both here and hereafter, depend on their being *regulated*, and wiſely *bounded*, in all the demands of their obſtinacy, pride, and wanton deſire. To *indulge*, here, is the ſame, as to *corrupt*, and *ruin*.

BUT, in common, let the exerciſe of their authority be mild, and perſwaſive. Let them avoid all *appearances*, of an arbitrary and domineering tyranny. Let not their *commands* be rigorous. Let them not treat their children as *ſlaves*, and exchange the character of father, for that of *oppreſſor*, and *enemy*. Let them *deny* no proper conveniencies, nor *abridge* of any innocent gratifications. For this is utterly unbecoming their ſtation, monſtrous and unnatural in itſelf, and the conſequence of it will probably be, an utter *alienation* of the childrens affection and duty; and *exciting* ſuch ſtrong paſſions of diſcontent, and reſentment, as may *end*, at length, in *avowed* contempt and diſobedience.

THUS,

THUS, have I prepared the way for the great point of all, *viz.* the proper *education* of children: But this, on account of its ſingular importance, I ſhall make the ſubject of a new chapter. In which, to render the whole more impreſſive, and clear to all capacities, the principles already mentioned, in a general way, muſt be frequently re-aſſumed, and argued from, and more copiouſly and minutely enforced.

CHAP. V.

On education.

IN treating of education *at large*, but more eſpecially of *religious* education, it is equally neceſſary, that the chief, and moſt dangerous, *impediments* ſhould be removed, as it is, or can be, that the fitteſt and moſt approved *rules* ſhould be preſcribed: Becauſe, while theſe *obſtructions* remain, and are likely to have their fatal *repugnant* influence, it is ſcarce poſſible, that the *righteſt rule*, in reaſon, ſhould have any more *real effect*, than if it was abſolutely *unknown*. 'If you would *cultivate* the ſoil, it is here, as in inanimate nature, you muſt prevent the growth of noxious *weeds*, that will *ſuffocate* the ſeeds of wiſdom, and virtue, in their very birth; and, by their rankneſs and luxuriancy, deprive the latter of their neceſſary *nouriſhment*, and hinder their ever riſing to a ſtate of *maturity*.'——Let *parents*, therefore, take particular care, that an *averſion*, to the terror of their authority, creates not a *ſlight* and *contempt* of their admonitions. By their kindneſs and condeſcenſion, let them induce their *children*, to place ſome degree of *confidence* in their *inſtructions*; and conſider, that if, by an unnatural harſh treatment, they are once brought to regard parents as their *enemies*, their beſt *advices* will be *ſuſpected*.

ANGER and reſentment naturally lead to an oppoſition, a warm determined oppoſition, of ſentiment and practice; eſpecially

ally in the *firſt openings* of human life, when *reaſon* is generally a *feeble* guide, without ſufficient *light*, or *authority*, to enforce its own laws; and *fancy*, and *paſſion*, are the chief ſteering principles, under whoſe *influence*, in a great meaſure, wiſdom, and even virtue itſelf, muſt be *gradually infuſed*. If our children *hate* us, they will never heartily *cheriſh* thoſe inſtructions; which, from *fear*, they may outwardly comply with: Nay their inward *reluctance*, when the reſtraint of authority is removed, will, probably, break out into unexpected acts of extravagance. Then, if not before, we ſhall ſee, with ſhame and bitter remorſe, the deſtructive conſequences of our too high ſtrain and arrogance of *power*, and experience, that it is amply revenged upon ourſelves.

WHEREAS, had the mild and gracious character of the *father*, reſtrained and tempered that of the *governor*, the child would probably have attended, on parental admonitions, with aſſiduity and delight. There might, then, have been an *early prepoſſeſſion*, from almoſt the firſt diſplays of thought, in favour of wiſdom, of rational religion, and practical ſerious virtue; 'which, before the underſtanding was capable of making any conſiderable efforts, in diſtinguiſhing between *right* and *wrong* impreſſions, might have been wrought into an uſeful *moral habit*: As *ſtrong*, and oftentimes as hard to be *conquered*, as, in ſome of the beſt and wiſeſt, are the firſt contracted *childiſh habits* of vice, and ſuperſtition.' This prepoſſeſſion, reaſon would, afterwards, as certainly *confirm*, as it would *diſſipate*, and *chaſe away*, all others of wild and unnatural growth. So that by this method of *introduction*, into reaſonable and accountable life, *good* principles may be both ingrafted, and eſtabliſhed; *bad* ones, perhaps, as eaſily planted; but, if the authority of reaſon be not quite

quite ſuppreſſed, not ſo long *retained*, nor *corroborated* by age, reflection, and experience.

ANOTHER preliminary, to wiſe and good *education*, is in general, the *guarding*, ſtrictly, againſt all the corrupt ſentiments, wrong paſſions, and early degenerate habits, which, till they are rooted out, or at leaſt reduced under the intire controul and diſcipline of reaſon, will render all the methods we can purſue, in forming the principles and manners of *youth*, fruitleſs and unſucceſsful. The greateſt pains in inſtructing, while theſe fatal obſtacles remain, muſt be like ſcattering *ſeed* on *rocks*, and barren *deſerts*, and where nature never intended, that there ſhould be any *verdure*, or *fertility*; and from whence indeed, in the *moral* part of the compariſon, it is eternally *fit*, for the puniſhment of inordinate paſſion, indolence, and vice, that no ſolid *proficiency*, nothing tending to *happineſs* upon the whole, ſhould ever ſpring.

DEFEND your *children*, therefore, as much as is poſſible, againſt the *firſt* impreſſions of profaneneſs, againſt blaſphemous violations of the holy name, and tremendous character, of GOD. Honour him, by a ſolemn acknowledgment and homage in your *families*, and neglect not to attend, *regularly*, on the appointed ſervices of his *public* worſhip. Be not yourſelves, in *example*, impious, whilſt you urge them to be religious. Inſtil into them *no aſpirings* after diſtinction, and pride of dreſs, of high rank, and politeneſs of education, while you deſire to inculcate the duty of *humility*. Be not *luxurious*, if you expect, from them, *moderation* of conduct. Be not *ſtiff* and *arrogant*, if you wiſh to form their manners, to *mildneſs* and *condeſcenſion*. Propoſe not your own *intemperance*, as the *comment* on your lectures of *ſobriety*;

briety; your own *diſorderly lives*, to recommend *chaſtity*; your *fraud*, to enforce *Juſtice*; nor your *partiality*, and *narrowneſs* of mind, to ſupport the great law of diſintereſted, and univerſal, *benevolence*. For by all theſe acts of inconſiſtency, by which you muſt condemn yourſelves, you will demonſtrate, that you are only, in *theory*, advocates for *virtue*, but, in *reality*, the votaries of *vice*; and that you are enemies to the moral government of GOD, to whom, it is *your children*'s duty, abſolutely to devote and conſecrate themſelves.

LET me add, that if inſtructions, admonitions, and example, are not ſufficient, to anſwer the great end of parental tuition and diſcipline, *corrections* are abſolutely neceſſary.——But *theſe* ſhould be mild, friendly, and diſpaſſionate, and the *reaſons* of them, in moſt caſes, propoſed to *children* themſelves; in order to convince their *judgments*, that they are neceſſary, and not deſpotic and tyrannical. We ſhould always guard, againſt their being extravagantly ſevere, leaſt we inſpire an opinion that they proceed not from *love*, but *cruelty*. It is likewiſe highly expedient, in order to their obtaining their proper effect, that they be not only *moderate*, but *ſeaſonable*——Upon the *firſt appearance* of *vicious* diſpoſition; that they may *check*, in its *infant* growth, what, upon being allowed to arrive to a ſtate of *confirmation*, might be utterly *incorrigible*.

'THE *delicate* conſtitution of the *child* may, perhaps be pleaded, in excluſion of this uſeful, and upon ſome occaſions indiſpenſable, branch of *parental* diſcipline.' And this, I allow, is a reaſon for its being *gentle*, and juſtly proportioned to his *age*, and ſtate of *health*, but it can be none for its being entirely *omitted*; becauſe the neglecting the caſtigation and improvement of the mind,

mind, for the ſake of bodily eaſe and indulgence (when theſe two things come into *competition*, ſo that the one or the other muſt be diſregarded) is an abſolute perverſion of the order of nature: It is a preferring *means* to *ends*, and *accidents* to things *eſſential:* It is, in effect, neglecting *moral*, for ſenſible, and *immortal*, for temporary and tranſient concerns, againſt all rules of reaſon, and every dictate both of ſelf-intereſt, and public good.

However, after all that I have now ſaid, on the head of moderate and ſeaſonable *correction* of childrens faults, eſpecially with reſpect to ſome tempers, which are more likely to be kept, within ſtrict bounds, by this kind of *rough* diſcipline, than by the *calm* remonſtrances and admonitions of reaſon: I muſt ſtill recommend it in general, as a moſt fit and beneficial rule in parental government, to avoid (as far as is poſſible) *all* meaſures of *ſeverity*, and try to influence their diſpoſitions and manners, by more *unconſtraining* and *generous* motives. For a rigid diſcipline may *repel*, but it is not ſo likely to *cure* and *reform*, a perverſe and evil temper. If children can be determined, to a dutiful and virtuous conduct, by a ſenſe of ingenuity, or ſhame, the motive will be much more *liberal*, more *extenſive*, as to every branch of religion, and worthy behaviour, and more *certain* and *laſting* in its conſequences.

'Shame is a principle as original, and eſſential, to human nature, as *hope*, or *fear*. The being deterred, by the *indecency* of a practice, neceſſarily implies ſomething of *virtue* in it, ſome degree of *reluctance*, and *horror*, at the apprehenſion of the vice itſelf.' But there may be the reſtraint of *fear*, powerful enough to prevent outward *acts* of wickedneſs, when the *temper* of the mind

mind is entirely depraved, and the vice, in the *habit* of it, cherished and indulged.' And this is an undeniable demonstration, that severe chastisements are *only*, or at least *chiefly*, fitted in their nature, to hinder children from being *notoriously* and *shamefully* vicious; and that principles of religion, reason, and honour, are the *right* foundation of their *solid improvement*. 'Refrain from the rod, thereby to *inspire* the child with *sublime* and *generous* sentiments of morality,'—may, more frequently, be a *prudent* and *just* rule in education, than——'spare the rod, and *corrupt* and *ruin* the child.' Both, according to the *difference* of natural disposition, or of acquired habits, may be proper and necessary: But, in general, nature dictates to discard *force*, and *compulsive* authority, when it is possible to operate by *persuasion*; to inculcate, strongly, the *infamy* of ignorance and vice, the *reasonable* character of wisdom, the *intrinsic* excellence, and amiableness, of religion. These notions, carefully impressed, will *purge*, at the same time that they rightly *inform*, the mind; and *fortify* the temper, by suggesting powerful *arguments*, against *yielding* to the insinuations of *youthful* lust and extravagance.

I BEG leave to pursue this argument a little farther, as it is one of the *chief* things to be regarded, in the just instruction and discipline of youth, or rather, indeed, as the *cardinal* point, on which the whole of their proficiency in wisdom, and their future virtue and usefulness, *depend*. 'The question, then, is not, whether methods of severity may not be *sometimes* necessary—for this is allowed; but which, in general, is the *preferable* course—the rigorous, or mild, the compulsive, or the ingenuous and liberal education?'

To reduce and conquer *obſtinacy*, the ſeverer method, and even the infliction of *corporal* puniſhments, may be often right and fit: Nay, indeed, they ſeem to be the only means, left, of quelling and controuling an *intractable* ſpirit, that is averſe to all *reaſon*, and incapable of receiving *impreſſions* from it. But theſe, with reſpect to the whole, are *rare* inſtances, and are perhaps ever likely to be ſo; as the *firſt* temper of youth is, in the main, *ſoft* and *flexible*, if it be not hardned by an *over-fond* and *indiſcreet* indulgence. And to propoſe a *plan* and *model* of education, which is ſuited only to more *uncommon* caſes, and not to the *generality*, muſt certainly be a prepoſterous and ill-concerted ſcheme.

A RIGOROUS diſcipline can neither inſpire a *love* and *eſteem* of virtue, nor a *diſlike* and *hatred* of vice; becauſe it can only *terrify*; but carries with it no *conviction* to the underſtanding, no addreſs of *influence*, or *perſwaſion*, to the moral faculties. It may impoſe the cloak, the form, and hypocritical diſſimulation of virtue; but has no immediate connection with *virtue itſelf*, either in habit, or practice. 'The two principal therefore, if not the only grounds, upon which it can ever be juſtified, are theſe——That it may check and prevent *acts* of *exceſs*, fatal to the vicious perſon *himſelf*, and which may, alſo, be reputed a blemiſh and ſtain to the honour of his *family*, and are a real violation of the peace and order of *civil ſocieties*——And, that by deterring from the *exerciſe*, it may gradually break the *force*, of evil habits, which, as *indulgence* cheriſhes and confirms, *mortification* and *ſelf-denial*, whether *conſtrained*, or voluntary, may, by a parity of reaſon, weaken.'

WHERE

WHERE there is no likelihood of anſwering either of theſe ends, but the temper of the offender continues, after all, deſperately and incorrigibly *ſullen*, and neither *reaſon* will convince, nor *generoſity* bend and mollify, nor *terror* diſcourage; and when *due* chaſtiſements have been given, and continued ſo *long*, as is fully ſufficient to maintain parental authority, and to ſerve for an *example* to deter others, from the like exceſſes of *ſtubborn* vice; it ſeems as if there could be *no uſe*, at all, in going on to puniſh ſuch as are abſolutely abandoned and irreclaimable: And a farther courſe of ſevere and harſh uſage, from whence, in theſe unhappy circumſtances, the *leaſt good* cannot be expected, will, in the judgment of almoſt all mankind, have more of the *appearance* of ſtern power and cruelty, than of wiſdom, juſtice, and good intention, in it.

WHAT has been, already ſaid, relates wholly to rigorous methods, when they are in themſelves *neceſſary*, and the *fitteſt* kind of correction of childrens faults. Permit me to add a few obſervations, beſides what have been before ſuggeſted, concerning meaſures of ſeverity, in all right and good education; and the *preference* of mildneſs and perſuaſion, and the way of more inſinuating and engaging addreſs, to the *tender minds* and *paſſions* of youth. This will plainly point out to *parents*, and *tutors*, what their duty and intereſt is; and how they may *beſt* attain the great *end* of their important truſt, to their own honour, and the laſting advantage of thoſe committed to their care.

'EXTREME ſeverity in *paternal* government, like *tyranny* of all other kinds, *depreſſes* and *breaks* the ſpirits, and begets a *puſil-*

animous, abject, ſlaviſh mind.' It enervates the force of *reſolution*, damps *emulation*, and *ardor*, the chief ſprings of wiſe and virtuous improvements; and of conſequence, by eſtabliſhing a habit of *ſervility* and *fear*, muſt, in a great degree, indiſpoſe young perſons, even when they are arrived to a mature age, for great deſigns and enterprizes, for many of the ſocial, and moſt generous, offices and purſuits of human life.

'In ſome, it raiſes a *prejudice*, ſcarce poſſible to be ever afterwards ſubdued, againſt virtue, and againſt religion itſelf; for the ſake of which, and to compel them to a ſtrict and cloſe obſervation of its laws, they have been ſo unmercifully and roughly *diſciplined*. This, from having ſadly experienced it to be the *ſpirit* of religion, in the *father*, they will be apt to imagine, for want of ſolidity of mind, and through the paſſion and hurry of youth, is its *natural* and *univerſal* diſpoſition.

'Others, again, ſeverity, inſtead of bending to a compliance, *hardens*.' They grow more ſtiff and obſtinate, through a *diſdain* of rigour, and an *oppoſition* to tyrannical power. They may, perhaps, be induced to *retain* and *cheriſh* their vices, which have coſt them ſuch cruel caſtigation, with greater *affection*, and a more *determined* ſpirit. 'Or elſe, as the natural complexion and frame of mind differs, ſeverity may inſpire ſtrong *diſpoſitions* to, which may at length ſettle in inveterate *habits* of, malice and revenge. Or, finally, they may learn, from *example*, to be oppreſſive and cruel, when they come, themſelves, to be entruſted with *authority*. And as even *pain itſelf*, by degrees, grows *familiar*, and the *longer experience* of it leſſens the very *ſenſe* and *feeling*, as well as the *fear*, of pain; this may diminiſh, and in a great meaſure root out, the *averſion*, with which they are inſpired,

ſpired, by nature, to the being the *inſtruments* of miſery and ſuffering to *others*.' They may come to think more *ſlightly* of it, as an offence againſt nature, the authority of GOD, and the common principles and dictates of humanity; and ſo may allow themſelves, in the commiſſion of this horrid crime, the more eaſily, and with leſs compunction and remorſe; eſpecially if they are of a temper, that is *inclined* to be *ſtern* and *arbitrary*.

'ADD to all this, that a too ſtrict and ſevere education, and particularly the extreme, or too frequent, uſe of *corporal* puniſhments, has a direct tendency to inſpire the minds of children, very early, with *degenerate*, baſe, and *mercenary* views. Where it is the principal method purſued, it can ſcarce fail of impreſſing, and rivetting in the mind, this *ungenerous* and *fatal* maxim; that the firſt and grand motive, by which they are to be influenced, even in *moral* offices, and with reſpect to *virtue* and *vice* themſelves, are *ſenſible pain*, or *pleaſure*.'

AND what can be the *conſequence* of ſuch wrong reaſoning, before the minds of children are capable of diſcerning the *error* and *fallacy* of it, but the preventing entirely their due improvement, and the utter confounding all wiſe and religious education? Their being upon their *guard*, while the danger, and terror, of the puniſhment are *directly* in their *view*; but, as ſoon as theſe are *removed* at a greater *diſtance*, giving themſelves an unbridled *ſcope*, in thoſe inſtances of vice and extravagance, to which they are more peculiarly addicted? Or, if they rather chooſe to undergo the *pain* of the *diſcipline*, than that of *reſtraint* of *appetite*, and of being *abridged* of their darling *pleaſures*; as long as they are acted by ſuch *ſenſual* and *grovelling* principles, they will go on, without

controul,

controul, notwithſtanding all meaſures of *ſeverity*, in a courſe of licentious and diſſolute living.

LET *parents*, therefore, be ſtrongly alarmed by theſe conſiderations, and excited to proper vigilance and circumſpection; leſt, by being *intemperate*, and *over-rigid*, in the exerciſe of their authority, they bring on the evil conſequences above-mentioned; to the utter depravation of their *childrens* manners, and the deſtruction of *their own* comfort and peace of mind.

I CAN, by no means, be underſtood to inſinuate, by any thing that has now been advanced, that *puniſhments*, as well as rewards, are ingredients not proper to be mixed with a *religious* or *liberal* education. On the contrary, beſides the ſingular caſe of unperſwadable and ſtubborn vice, they are, in general (as has been, before, more than once allowed) highly neceſſary. *No* government can ſubſiſt, or at leaſt be fully ſupported, without them. And though an ingenuous temper, and the love of virtue for itſelf, be the *beſt* ſprings of action; yet it is a wild ſcheme, to attempt to influence mankind (in a world where *virtue* is ſurrounded with *diſcouragements* and *difficulties*, and where the *examples* of *vice* are numerous, and the *temptations* to it very powerful, inſinuating, and dangerous) by the *ſole* efficacy of ſo *high* and *refined* a motive.

IN ſuch a ſtate of things, it is evidently fit, 'that the temptations to *ill* ſhould be, in ſome meaſure, counterbalanced, by *contrary incitements*, and, as it were, *temptations*, to the practice of what is *good: Addreſſed* to the very ſame *principles*, and *paſſions*, in human nature, by which vice, generally, *introduces* itſelf.'

ſelf.' And this is the more neceſſary, in the *firſt* rudiments and eſſays of education, when the *reaſon* of the child has but a ſmall, and inconſiderable, energy, and the *inſinuations* both of good and evil muſt chiefly be, by means of the *paſſions*.

'ALL, therefore, that I intend is, that *rewards*, and *puniſhments*, ſhould be ſo contrived, and ſo *proportioned*, as to nouriſh and ſtrengthen, as much as is poſſible, the ſenſe of *ingenuity* and *honour*; that the *ſhame* and *infamy* of the puniſhment ſhould be the *principal* circumſtance, adapted to *deter*, and the *dignity* and *glory* of the reward, to *encourage*.' And, of *this kind*, innumerable inſtances may be eaſily found, that will operate as *effectually*, eſpecially by the help of *uſe* and *habit*, as the lower and more mercenary principles.

BUT, in order to this, the *tempers* of children muſt be carefully ſtudied, and what are their ſtrongeſt and moſt prevailing *biaſſes*. If there are any *bad ſeeds* fixed in their minds, they ſhould, as was obſerved before, with the utmoſt diligence and application, be *rooted out*. But if this cannot be effected, the next ſtep is, to endeavour to govern and direct them *right*, and give them a *generous* and *virtuous* turn. By this means ambition, and many other paſſions, which diſcover themſelves *early* in the minds of *youth*, may be very beneficially *conducted*, and made *ſubſervient* to the moſt noble purpoſes.

THE greateſt part, of what has been hitherto offered, may be applied to the buſineſs of education *at large*; the whole, of what remains, will be ſtrictly confined to the ſerious *recommendation*, and to the propoſing a juſt *plan*, of *religious*, the moſt important branch of all *wiſe*, and *uſeful*, education. Nothing elſe can be

be ſo worthy of our ſolicitous, care, and ſteady attention. If the foundation be, *here*, rightly laid, we provide, in the ſureſt manner, for our *childrens* future honour, and their happineſs throughout the whole period of their exiſtence; not for a low, fleeting, animal, but for a reaſonable, moral, immortal life. We take the only method, to render all their other accompliſhments, of learning, extenſive knowledge, polite addreſs, engaging and ingenuous manners, in the higheſt degree *graceful*, and *beneficial*; to *refine* their diſpoſitions, *enoble* their views, fit them for offices of *ſociety* and *friendſhip*, and urge them from the ſublimeſt of all motives, and motives of the moſt certain and conſtant efficacy, to *laudable* and *great* purſuits.

In a word, ſo far as the beſt *principles*, and the utmoſt *precautions*, of human prudence can avail, we guard thoſe tender branches of the family (whom the God of nature, the univerſal parent, has eſpecially committed to our *tutorage*, while they are *credulous* and *unexperienced*) againſt the dangerous ſnares of life; and thoſe exceſſes of vice and falſe pleaſure, which impair the health, and corrupt the manners of youth, often to ſuch a degree, that they are never, afterwards, recovered to a due *ſtrength* and *vigor*, either of *body*, or *mind*. 'And thus the *rational* workmanſhip of God is, in a manner, rendered abortive, and ſtifled in its very birth. It is *prevented*, not by any direct *fault* of its own, but before it becomes capable of diſtinguiſhing, rightly, between good and evil; it is prevented, I ſay, merely through its *misfortune*, in having been entruſted to the conduct of *unnatural* and *faithleſs guardians*, from ſo much as *aſpiring* after any improvements of virtue and religion, and from ever *thinking*, *in earneſt*, how it may *beſt* attain the end of its creation.'

And

And from hence it undeniably follows, that no man deſerves, to ſuch a degree, the character of a *father* abſolutely *ſavage* and *cruel*, as he, who *entirely neglects* to inſtruct his children, in the knowledge, the grateful adoration, and ſerious reverence of God, and the eternal momentous principles of *virtue* and *true religion*. Such an one, who has no concern at all about their *chief intereſt*, in *time*, and to *eternity*, muſt (if he himſelf *believes* that there is a God, and that man, as to his *mind*, is of *nobler extract*, and allowed to form more *extended proſpects*, than a brute) be quite a *barbarian*, alienated from the taſte and feelings of humanity, and hardned againſt the tendereſt ſympathies of nature.

For he is the *inſtrument* of communicating a being, *weak*, *helpleſs*, *ignorant*, *unapprehenſive* of danger in a great degree (for a conſiderable time, *after* reaſon has *firſt* began to diſplay itſelf) and yet expoſes it to innumerable, fatal, *hazards* of its virtue, and peace. Inſtead of endeavouring to point out to it its *duty*, and the paths that leads to *happineſs*, its moſt pernicious *exceſſes*, and the high road of *diſhonour*, and *miſery*, he is ſtupidly *inſenſible* of its moſt preſſing *exigencies*; 'and acts, as if he had *directly* propoſed it to himſelf, as his chief *end*, in being the *ſecondary* cauſe of its exiſtence, to leave it to *ſhift*, as it *could*, deſtitute of proper admonition and culture, amidſt the many *chances* that lay againſt its right conduct; or, which amounts to much the ſame, to devote it to *probable* vice, ſhame, and infelicity.'

And is not ſuch a behaviour exceſſively ſhocking to *reaſon!* to *benevolence!* to all *honeſt*, *ſober* thought! to *rude* nature, as well as to *refinements* of philoſophy, and the *divine illuminations* of the *Chriſtian* religion! If children may be thus neglected, the

whole human race muſt have been deſigned, in the *firſt ſtage* of their lives, when they ſtand in need of the moſt officious attendance, and careful cultivation, to be *deſerted* and *abandoned*; and conſequently, to be placed, by nature, in thoſe *diſtreſſed* and *forlorn* circumſtances, to which, in all countries pretending to civility, and juſt regulations of government, only the children of the meaner and poorer part are expoſed: 'In *that ſtate*, towards which, the *pity* of the *generous* mind *ſooneſt* relents, as one of the moſt *deplorable* of all others, and as having a *ſingular* claim to its *ſuccour* and *relief*.'

BRUTE creatures are, regularly, furniſhed with all the *aids*, that are neceſſary to the *purpoſes* of their *animal* life, under the never-ceaſing *providence*, and *tutorage*, of the creator himſelf; whoſe *wiſdom* animates the *inſtincts* of birds, and beaſts, towards their *young*——even the moſt wild and rapacious: And *like* inſtincts are implanted, in the young ones of every *ſpecies*, to follow the *direction*, and improve the *helps*, which are afforded them by nature. But mankind (upon a ſuppoſition, that the conduct of the unnatural father, above-deſcribed, be in itſelf juſt) are all *Orphans*; expoſed to the dangers of groſs *ignorance*, and utter *irregularity* of manners, not only by their *immediate parents*, but by the *common parent* of the whole. They muſt, of conſequence, with reſpect to the *culture* of their minds, and the right *formation* of their moral characters, inherit, *from nature*, all the *miſeries* of orphans. But, moſt ſurely, this, inſtead of being his *original plan*, muſt be infinitely *deteſtable* in the eyes of that moſt perfect being, whoſe *tender mercies* are *over all his works* *; and who, to manifeſt his peculiar inclination to

* Pſal. cxlv. 9.

aſſiſt,

aſſiſt, and relieve, thoſe of his creatures, who are moſt *defenceleſs* and *indigent*, has expreſsly repreſented himſelf as the *widows judge*, and the *father of the fatherleſs* †.

But I am not yet willing to drop this part of the ſubject, and ſhall therefore endeavour, farther, to expoſe the *vile* and *cruel* character of ſuch parents, by ſetting the argument in a *comparative* light. Mankind are, almoſt, univerſally agreed, that for parents to neglect the *health* of their children, and to make no *proviſion* at all, or but a *ſcanty* and *incompetent* proviſion, for their *welfare*, and comfortable *ſubſiſtence* in this world, is a ſcandalous act of *inhumanity*, and ſetting both *nature*, and God, at *defiance*. If, in a *ſickly* and *declining* condition, due means be not uſed for their *recovery*, to a ſtate of more confirmed ſtrength and vigour; if under their long, natural, *inability* to help themſelves, they are not tenderly ſupported and cheriſhed; or if the *relief* afforded (in theſe, and all other caſes of diſtreſs) be not *proportioned* to the parents circumſtances; if it be *extorted* by the fear of cenſure, and ſprings not at all from *affection*, and a ſenſe of *parental duty*——there is ſcarce any man, but what would *cenſure*, and *condemn*. Nay, here, even the unnatural *parent*, at certain ſeaſons of more *ſober* and *cool* recollection, would be apt to condemn *himſelf*.

'But *religion*, being an *internal* principle, not obvious to *ſenſe*, and *eternity*, as to its circumſtances, a *concealed* and *inviſible* ſcene, *barbarities*, and *violations* of natural duty, with reſpect to *theſe*, are not ſo *groſsly* diſcerned. Beſides, the *offence*, in this laſt inſtance, is too common and general, upon which account,

† Pſal. lxviii. 5.

the *bulk* of the *world* are not ſo apt to *take notice* of errors, and neglects, relating to the *mind*; and the *parent* paſſes them over in *ſilence*, and *unconcern*, as points but little regarded.'

And yet, moſt ſurely, in the true nature and reaſon of things, the not cultivating *religious* principles, and virtuous habits, is a crime of as much *greater* malignity, than that of not attending to, and promoting, the right diſcharge of all *animal* functions, as reaſon, and the ſublime offices of morality, are *ſuperior* to mere bodily exerciſes; as the juſt occupations of *men*, the ſupreme felicity of *angels* (to whom mankind, by their higher faculties, are nearly allied) are infinitely *preferable* to the utmoſt delights, that ſenſe and inſtinct can poſſibly yield.

I now proceed, having ſufficiently enforced, both on the principles of natural, and revealed, religion, the parent's *obligation* to diſcharge this part of his duty, to ſettle briefly the *general ſyſtem*, and the *proper model*, for religious education. And,

In the First place, 'it is a rule of great importance, that the *religious* inſtruction of *children* be *plain*, and *intelligible*; not only adapted to their *age*, and *capacities* of reaſon, but to their *real degrees* of reaſon, and *actual proficiency* in knowledge. To teach them, *by rote*, things, of which they have no *underſtanding*, is exactly the ſame, with giving them *no inſtruction* at all. Nay, it may, ſometimes, be attended even with worſe conſequences; becauſe, the impoſing upon them the *learning* of *words*, from which they can derive no information, no ideas at all, may infuſe into their minds an *early deep* impreſſion, that religion is a thing entirely *arbitrary*; from which, they can, reaſonably, expect no more ſolid *advantage*, than a ſlave has, in obeying

obeying the will of a tyrant—*i. e.* the being, merely, exempted from *puniſhment*, without any rational hope of a *reward*. If they are obliged, for example, in the *firſt* rudiments, and exerciſes, of their reaſon, to learn, and *retain*, the following words, *viz.* that 'Juſtification is an act of GOD's free grace, 'wherein he pardoneth all our ſins, and accepteth us as righte-'ous in his ſight, only for the righteouſneſs of *Chriſt* imputed to 'us, and received by faith alone.'—— (without inquiring, at preſent, whether this be a *ſcriptural* doctrine, or not) moſt certain it is, that they might, almoſt as well, have been taught the pronunciation of a ſentence in *Greek*, or *Arabic*, as a neceſſary article of *true religion:* Becauſe, in *both* caſes, they are obliged to learn *ſomewhat*, the *ſenſe* of which they are entirely ignorant of; and which, the *parent*, the *inſtructor* himſelf, is, generally, unable to *explain*.

'And, from hence, it neceſſarily follows, that the *inſtruction*, in principles of religion, ſhould be *progreſſive*, and *gradual*, as the underſtanding grows *mature*, and *ripe* for receiving it.' To *overload* a tender mind, breaks its *force* of *genius*, diſcourages its *application*, and may fix an inveterate *prejudice*, againſt religion itſelf. Many parts, eſpecially of the *doctrines*, and *evidences*, of revealed religion, children ſeem, at *firſt*, to be not capable of comprehending: It is ſcarce poſſible, therefore, that theſe ſhould eſtabliſh any good principles, and diſpoſitions, in their minds. And, becauſe they experience nothing of this kind, they may, perhaps, be led to conclude that there is nothing of *real moment* in theſe things, and be *diſcouraged*, ever afterwards, from engaging in a *ſerious* diſquiſition into ſuch, apparently, *dry*, *unprofitable*, ſpeculations; againſt which, by *wrong* management, they have been

been *early* prepoſſeſſed, as *perplexed* and *intricate*, and of but little importance to their *happineſs*.

'ANOTHER rule, therefore, to be obſerved in religious education is, to *begin* with thoſe *firſt principles*, on which *all religion*, whether natural or revealed, is *founded*; and by which, alone, its authority can be *ſupported*, and *maintained*.' From their own *ſenſes* and *experience*, as ſoon as they become *capable* of exertions and operations of *reaſon*, youth may have eaſily inſtilled, and eſtabliſhed in their minds, the *general notion* of a *firſt cauſe*. They have a *ſentiment*, derived from *nature*, and confirmed by the *weakneſs* and *dependence* of their infant ſtate, that they were not the *authors* of their *own exiſtence*: They will ſoon admit this, alſo, of their *parents*; whom they ſee to be of the *ſame kind* with themſelves, though advanced to *higher degrees* of ſtrength, and perfection, in human nature.

THEY will therefore, without much difficulty, admit the idea of an *univerſal parent*, preſiding over, and governing, all mankind: That they are bound to pay *him* a ſupreme *reverence*; that they owed to *him*, in their defenceleſs ſtate of *infancy*, all the *ſupports*, and *accommodations*, of life; that *his government* is *mild* and *gracious*, and his *puniſhments*, when he is obliged to correct, *neceſſary*, and intended for *their good*; that he is *a witneſs* to all their *follies*; and that whatever *exceſſes*, they are either *aſhamed*, or *afraid*, to commit, in the preſence of their earthly parents, they ſhould be much *more ſollicitous* not to indulge themſelves in, under his conſtant *notice* and *inſpection*. Theſe fundamental principles, of *all* religion, may be explained, and *deeply fixed* in the minds of children, *as ſoon*, almoſt, as they are capable of being *inſtructed* in any branch of *knowledge*.

BUT

BUT their more *explicite* knowledge of the *character*, and *perfections*, of GOD, would be *beſt* infuſed by *degrees*; and may, perhaps, be more properly communicated, as *curioſity* prompts them to *enlarge* their views, and in anſwer to the *queſtions*, which *general diſcourſes*, on theſe ſubjects, will naturally extort from *children*, than by *ſtraining*, and *racking*, their underſtandings, and impoſing *meaſures* of knowledge, to which, their faculties are not fully *adapted*.

BUT let not the character, of GOD, be ever repreſented in a *diſcouraging*, but always, in the *firſt* rudiments, and eſſays, of piety, in an *engaging* and *attractive*, light. Let him be *noted*, not for ſeverity, but, chiefly, for condeſcenſion and mercy; that the love of a *father*, and not the ſervile dread of an *enemy*, may be eſtabliſhed as the *firſt principle* of religion. Let not your general repreſentations of religion *terrify*, but *invite* to a *chearful* approbation, and acceptance of it. Impoſe no rigid *auſterities*, no unneceſſary *reſtraints* of innocence. Let not your *ſervice* of GOD, your expreſſions and offices of *piety*, wear a *gloomy* and *melancholy* aſpect, leaſt you inſpire an *early averſion* to it.

AND with reſpect to the *evidences* of *Chriſtianity*, in *particular*, open the minds of children by degrees. 'Endeavour to impreſs a ſtrong ſenſe of its *intrinſic excellence*, and *tendency* to *happineſs*, before you engage their minds, in an attention to its *external proofs*; which, it requires a greater *compaſs* and *ſtrength* of judgment, *fully* to diſcern, and comprehend.'

AGAIN, it ought to be our *firſt* care, to plant, in childrens minds, the *ſeeds*, eſpecially, of the following virtues: Of *juſtice*, *ſincerity*,

ſincerity, *civility*, *ſubmiſſion*, *friendſhip*, *generoſity*, *compaſſion*, *and mercy*;' that they may work themſelves *inſenſibly*, and take *faſt root*, in the flexible, pliant, temper, and habit of their nature, even while they are incapable, in a great meaſure, of *reaſoning*, about *theſe*, or *any other*, ſubjects. And, here, I would recommend it, as moſt proper, to inſtruct them by *pertinent*, and *ſtriking*, *examples*; whether couched under *apt fables*, and *allegories*, or ſuch as have occurred in *real life*. And, by the ſame method, they may alſo be, in the moſt effectual, and forcible manner, taught the *odious malignant* nature, and *dreadful* effects, of the contrary vices of *fraud*, *envy*, *malice*, and *revenge*.

FINALLY, in their reading the *holy Scriptures*, it were greatly to be wiſhed, 'that *ſuch parts* were wiſely *ſelected*, as are beſt *ſuited* to their weak, uncultivated, and inexperienced minds: Such *devotional* paſſages, as are moſt free from *figures*; and ſuch *moral rules*, as theſe—— *Whatſoever ye would, that men ſhould do unto you, do ye even ſo to them* *——*Children, obey your parents* †——*As you have opportunity, do good to all* ‡——*Be cloathed with humility*; and *gentle* towards *all men* §——*Put away lying*, *wrath*, *anger*, *clamour*, *malice*, and *forgive one another* ‖:' And, to conclude this head, thoſe *Scripture hiſtories* ſhould be, chiefly, recommended, which repreſent, in a *ſtrong* and *affecting* view, the obligations of *early piety*, *benevolence*, and *goodneſs*.

'BUT let *parents* be, above all things, careful, not to inſpire their children, with a blind, intemperate *zeal*, for any peculiar *ſyſtem*, or *party*, in religion,' leſt they prejudice their minds, both againſt the religion of *nature*, and *real Chriſtianity*; or, at

* Matth. vii. 12. † Eph. vi. 1. ‡ Gal. vi. 10.
§ 1 Pet. v. 5. 2 Tim. ii. 24. ‖ Eph. iv. 25, 30, 31.

leaſt

leaſt (which, yet, is a conſequence, to be *guarded* againſt, with the utmoſt precaution) train them up in a habit of *contentious*, *angry*, controverſy, and in a *bitter*, *narrow*, and *uncharitable* diſpoſition.

THESE things, I have ſuggeſted, only as hints, and rough ſketches, of a proper *model* for *religious*, and *Chriſtian*, education. *Other* rules, equally juſt, may, without doubt, be added; but, I am perſwaded, that theſe will be found, in *practice*, to be eminently *uſeful*——and 'a more *effectual* guard, than the *common methods* of education have been, hitherto, found to be, againſt the dangerous encroachments both of *infidelity*, and *vice*.'

CHAP. VI.

Of the duties of children *towards their* parents.

IT is a moſt certain truth, and what ought frequently to be enforced as a kind of fundamental principle, that in points of morality, in which GOD is not to be conſidered as the *direct object* of the duty required, a ſerious regard to *him* is not however, nor can be in reaſon, excluded; becauſe all the *laws* of *ſocial* honour, juſtice, reſpect, and gratitude, bear the ſtamp of his *ſupreme authority*; and reſult from that wiſe order, and thoſe mutual relations, which, *by his will*, ſubſiſts every where uniformly in nature, as the *ground* of the virtues which are more ſtrictly human, or of thoſe common interchangeable offices of kindneſs, and equity, which all men, without exception, are bound to perform. From the natural and univerſal obligations of *piety*, the tranſition is both ſhort, and eaſy, to thoſe of *ſocial morality*.

AND, more particularly, from our duty to GOD the *univerſal parent*, we deſcend, as it were, immediately, and in the very next ſtep, to thoſe indiſpenſable ties of duty, under which we are held to our *earthly parent*; which are founded, though not on exactly *equal*, yet on *correſponding* and *ſimilar*, reaſons——On a *natural right* of *juriſdiction*, and an *authority* derived from the very *relation* they ſtand in to us; on their *tender care* for our preſervation and well being, and a variety of benefits conferred upon

upon us; all which loudly demand proportionable returns of *reſpect*, and *gratitude*.

And becauſe of the *affinity* there is, as to the general reaſons from whence they both flow, between that religious veneration, ſolemnly, and moſt juſtly, rendred to the ſupreme father of mankind, and the affection and gratitude, that are due to earthly parents, this laſt branch of our duty is deſcribed, by St. *Paul*, by the name of *piety*; plainly intimating, that there is ſomething *particularly* ſacred and inviolable in it, and intending to *diſtinguiſh* it, as a virtue of a more refined and exalted rank, from all the other intercourſes of gratitude, beneficence, and juſtice, which the great ends of human *ſociety*, and *happineſs*, require.

I have reaſoned hitherto downwards, from the parental *character* of God, and the *ſovereign* honours which unalienably belong to it, to *that* of *inferior parents*, and its juſt claim of *ſubordinate* honour. But whence, it may be enquired, did it originally proceed, that the appellation of a *father* was ſo early, and has been attributed ſo univerſally, to the almighty Deity? Whence could it ariſe, that it has been looked upon as one of his moſt *amiable* and *reverend* titles, exacting profound and humble *reſpect*, abſolute *ſubmiſſion*, and affectionate and chearful *obedience?* Whence could this ſo probably ſpring, as from a *prevailing ſenſe*, and *high eſteem*, of paternal authority, and the *reverence* indiſpenſably due to it, from motives of reaſon and ingenuity?—This, doubtleſs, ſhews us, what are the *genuine* and *undepraved* ſentiments of human nature.

And, accordingly, no duty has been leſs *obſcured*, than this of the reſpect of children towards their parents; nor has the *in-*

fluence of any, within the whole compaſs of morality, been leſs *diminiſhed*, by all the *corruptions*, groſs *infatuations*, and *ſavage manners*, introduced among mankind. It has held its place, and been acknowledged, for the moſt part, to have a rank of preheminence and dignity, not only as far as *true religion* has been propagated, but under, almoſt, every form of corrupt and vile *ſuperſtition*. The *rude* ſenſe of the *wild Indian*, the *improved* reaſon of the *Philoſopher*, and the *Chriſtian*, the *uncultivated*, and the *refined*, the *barbarous*, and the *civilized*, nations of the world have joined, unanimouſly, in aſſerting its obligation, as one of the primitive laws of *nature*. Nay, it ſeems to have remained, in times of the moſt degenerate *ignorance*, and where the *knowledge* of a DEITY could ſcarce be traced; as if it was a kind of inſuppreſſible *inſtinct* in nature. Some of the wiſeſt *lawgivers* have thought fit, in their inſtitutions of government, to diſtinguiſh it by *public honours*, as one of the firſt bonds of human ſociety; and the contrary crime has been the object of general *abhorrence*, and loaded with uncommon *ignominy*, as the mark of a moſt *profligate* mind, and a violation of *humanity* itſelf.

BUT I proceed to a more particular, and diſtinct, conſideration of the ſubject. And the *whole* of *filial duty* is, in the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, repreſented to us by the general term, *honour*: Which, in itſelf, is capable of *various ſenſes*, according to the *different circumſtances* of the perſons, to whom it is to be paid. The *honour*, which it may be, upon many occaſions, *fit* to *confer* upon an *inferior*, muſt, neceſſarily, in order to preſerve a *propriety* of behaviour, and conform to the *eſtabliſhments* and *conſtitutions* of nature (which are the only adequate *ſtandard*) differ, in many particulars, from that which is *due* to

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an *equal.* And this again, upon the ſame rule of propriety, muſt be very different from what a *ſuperior* may *rightly claim.* Nay, where the offices required are the ſame in *kind*, offices, for inſtance, of affectionate *eſteem*, and *gratitude*, they muſt vary either in the *manner* of their expreſſion, or as to the *degree*, in which they are exerciſed: Otherwiſe, we ſhall deſtroy all order, and, by aboliſhing *every diſtinction* of rank and character, throw the ſcheme of nature into confuſion.

And, even with reſpect to *ſuperiors* themſelves, all honours, that are *juſtly* beſtowed, muſt, of neceſſity, be *differently* meaſured——as the ſuperiority is in its nature *greater*, or *leſs*; *accidental*, or *natural*; *temporary*, or *unalterable.* The honours, therefore, due to *parents* muſt, in the nature of things, be more *fixed* and *undiminiſhable*, becauſe founded on *eternal reaſon*, than thoſe which are due to any *particular order* of *magiſtrates*; whoſe authority ſubſiſts upon *ſpontaneous* and *mutable forms* of government: Since no *one ſingle ſpecies* of government is neceſſary for the good of mankind, though *government in general* be neceſſary.

But, then, it is altogether as plain and certain a truth, that the reverence of *parents*, in every poſſible inſtance of *competition* and *co-rivalſhip*, muſt yield and ſubmit to that of the *father*, and *lord*, both of them and of their children, *equally* the father, and lord, of both; and can be rationally *required*, and rationally *expreſſed*, in no other inſtances, than what are agreeable to the fixed *courſe* of *nature*; the *welfare* of *ſociety*, under its ſeveral adminiſtrations of government (provided they tend, upon the whole, to univerſal happineſs) and to the *will* of God, in *what way ſoever*, it be diſtinctly and plainly ſignified.

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I SHALL only add, that, by the doctrine of revealed religion, and by the reaſon of the thing, filial honour is aſcertained to *both* the parents; and with moſt apparent *equity:* Since the ſeveral offices, they are reſpectively obliged to ſuſtain, afford an undeniable ground for *eſteem* and *veneration.* And if, in any caſe, *one* parent has a *peculiar claim*, the *other* will be found to have a *ſingular merit* in ſome other reſpect, which may ſerve as a *counter-balance* to it.

WHENEVER, therefore, family *diſcords* riſe to ſuch a melancholy heighth, through intemperance of paſſion, or a ſtubborn diſpoſition, that thoſe, whoſe duty it is to regulate the affairs of it, and maintain quiet and harmony, are unhappily *alienated* from each other, and in a ſtate of determined *oppoſition*; if, I ſay, in ſuch a fatal confuſion of all family order, a *father*, preſuming on his *peculiar right* to dictate and command, ſhould (though he thereby, in effect, undermines his own authority) order his children to ſlight, and behave with diſregard towards, the *other parent*; ſuch orders being *null* and *void* in themſelves, as they tend to root out *natural affection*, and are deſtructive of *natural right*, children are not only *excuſed* in declining to yield obedience to them, but it is their *duty* not to obey.

BUT then, to ſhew that they proceed upon ſome good principles, and do not act from mere *capriciouſneſs*, or *obſtinacy*, it may be fit for them, *calmly* to *expoſtulate* with ſuch an arbitrary parent, and offer their *reaſons* with a *ſubmiſſive* and *decent reſpect:* And, if they underſtand the true *ground*, and juſt *meaſures*, of their duty, or deſire only to preſerve an *uniformity* and *conſiſtency* in their conduct, they will not, even upon ſuch an occaſion

caſion as this (though their *age* ſhould *authoriſe* them to uſe an ingenuous and honeſt *freedom*) diſcover any thing of *haughtineſs* and ungoverned *paſſion*, or which has the appearance of *inſolence* and *contempt*.

THUS much may ſuffice, for the general conſideration of the ſubject. In explaining it more at large, I ſhall treat of it under almoſt the ſame heads, to which it has been reduced, with ſcarce any variety, by the beſt writers, who have undertaken the diſcuſſion of it; becauſe this appears, to me, to be a moſt clear and natural method. The *honour*, then, which is to be paid to parents, not as a merely *inſtituted* and *arbitrary* ſervice, but as a debt of *nature*, implies in it —— '*affection*, and *gratitude*; *reverence*, and *ſubmiſſion*; *concealing*, or *extenuating*, their *imperfections*, and *vindicating* their *perſonal honour*, ſo far as right, and the truth of the caſe, will admit; *obedience* to their commands, to the utmoſt extent of their *rational* and *juſt* authority; and, whenever it is wanted through a decay of their worldly ſubſtance, the infirmities of age, or any other of the incident misfortunes or calamities of human life, affording them, in proportion to our *ability*, and *rank*, a *competent*, *caſy*, and *honourable ſubſiſtence*.'——Under theſe heads, the whole of *filial duty* will be comprehended; which I ſhall, therefore, briefly illuſtrate, in the order in which they ſtand.

AND, in the FIRST place, one, and a very conſiderable, part of the honour, which children owe their parents, is 'a ſincere *affection*, and lively *gratitude*.'——But why, it may be aſked, is this ſtiled *honour*? I Anſwer, that though affection and gratitude may be exerciſed towards an *inferior*, 'they are, however, not only a *real*, but a *ſingular* and *diſtinguiſhed*, *honour* done

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to our parents, notwithſtanding their unqueſtionable rank of *ſuperiority*, and the natural *authority* over us, with which they are inveſted; becauſe they are a *public acknowledgment* of their humanity, their affectionate care and condeſcenſion, of the graciouſneſs of their paternal government, and the benefits we have received from it.'

To *ſerve* from a grateful ſenſe of *voluntary* and *unmerited* favours, and from a mere principle of *chearful*, *filial* duty, is the moſt exalted honour, that any, even the higheſt orders of created beings, are capable of rendering to God himſelf; as it is a public evidence given, that he is not ſevere, and arbitrary, but propitious, and indulgent to his children. And if any being whatſoever chuſes the *forced* reſpect, that flows from a *dread* of his ſuperior power, rather than a *free* ſubmiſſion, founded on *affection*, and deliberate *choice*, he muſt, in his *diſpoſitions*, and in all his *governing views*, be a tyrant, and not a father.

Allowing then an unfeigned affection, and grateful reſentment of obligations conferred, to be an eſſential, and one of the moſt important, branches of that *honour*, which the *very beſt* of parents has a right to claim; the next thing to be inquired into will be, 'what is the true *ground*, and *foundation* in nature, on which it is *raiſed*, and by which it is *ſupported?*'

And to this, let *children themſelves*, notwithſtanding their affectation of *independence*, and their *private diſquietudes*, on account of interruptions in their fond purſuits of favourite pleaſures, and the checks given to their looſe and luxurious fancies, anſwer. I ſuppoſe them, now, to be arrived to ſome *clearneſs*, and *maturity* of underſtanding, or elſe they are *entirely ſubject* to parental

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government. Let them then, in *a capacity* to *diſcern* between *good* and *evil*, anſwer upon their *conſciences*, and after ſolemn and grave *deliberation*, to the following queſtions.

'WHETHER (not to mention the inſtrumental communication of being by their parents, becauſe it is not ſo clear, that that is generally intended as a *benefit*)——Whether, I ſay, the vaſt *fatigue* ſuſtained, in *nurſing* and *cheriſhing* their *infant* ſtate; the making *proviſion* for them, with innumerable *anxieties*, when they were abſolutely *defenceleſs*, and *deſtitute* of all other aid; the *bearing* with their *peeviſh*, *capricious*, and *untractable* tempers; the parents *care*, and *expence*, in their *education*; their *ſolicitude* to provide for their *future ſubſiſtence*; their *reſtleſs days* and *wakeful nights*, to ſecure them from impending *dangers*; the *forming* their *manners* aright (ſo *intended* at leaſt, though the deſign might be unhappily fruſtrated by unforeſeen accidents) the fixing their *ſituation* in life to *honour*, and *advantage*; and a very *conſiderable* part, at leaſt, of all this *goodneſs* and *care* exerciſed, before their parents had any ſubſtantial *proof* of their *diſpoſitions*, without any *antecedent merit*, and from *natural*, *pure*, *diſintereſted* benevolence —— Let children, I ſay, anſwer, for themſelves, upon their *conſciences*, their ſenſe of *piety* to GOD, and of *natural duty*, whether theſe things do not demand the moſt *fervent affection*, and an *eternal gratitude*. Which are ties not to be *diſſolved*, by a *ſtern*, *froward* temper, appearing on ſome particular occaſions; nor by mixtures of *imperious* conduct, *unnaturally*, indeed, *interſperſed*, with this general ſcene of *benevolence* and *obligation*.'

BUT what are the particular methods, in which this *honour*, due from children to their parents, ought to be *expreſſed*? The anſwer

fwer is obvious, *viz.* 'that they ſhould ſerve them with *alacrity*, and ſtrive, if poſſible, to *anticipate* their *commands*; that they ſhould *conform* to their *orders*, and *regulations* of family government; that they be afraid of *diſpleaſing* them, by taking, *publicly*, even ſuch *liberties* as are in themſelves *innocent*; and diſcover, in general, not only a diſpoſition to be *obſervant*, in points of *duty*, but an inclination to *oblige*, in matters of *indifference*.'

And *parents*, in order to cultivate this excellent filial temper, 'muſt be *mild* and *acceſſible*, and, as their children, grow in *years*, bring them more upon a *level* with themſelves; and eſpecially provide, in their education, for that great point of all, inſtilling into their minds ſolid ſentiments of *wiſdom*, and *piety*; of which, they will ſoon perceive the vaſt and eminent advantage; and be diſpoſed, ever afterwards, to teſtify the moſt ſincere and warm affection to thoſe, whom they will find, by *experience*, to have been, by their prudent care, the *chief inſtruments* of their *higheſt felicity*.'

The next thing contained, in the *honour* due to parents, is '*reverence*, and *ſubmiſſion*.' This, it may be thought, more exactly *ſuits* with the idea, that is generally affixed to the word honour, than what was mentioned under the foregoing head: But the true ground of the *affection*, *gratitude*, and *reverence* is, in reality, much the *ſame*; and *neither* of them can be *ſeparated* from the *other*, without weakning, or deſtroying the *whole*.

The generality of mankind are, indeed, ſo miſled by their pride, as to be fond of appearing in the *pomp*, and *ſtate* of ſuperiority:

riority: They can, therefore, hardly be perſwaded, to think any thing a *ſolid* mark of *honour*, but what carries with it the face of *ſervility*, and *fear*. 'But it ſhould always be conſidered, that there is a plain difference between *dread*, and *reverence*; and that the proper reverence of a parent, when it is carried to its moſt rational heighth, and ſhows the trueſt honour, is *nothing like* the *fear*, which a *ſlave* feels of an *abſolute* and *rigorous maſter*; but the *humble veneration* of one, in whom the characters of *protector*, *friend*, and *governour*, are all united.'

AND what, now, are the *reaſons*, which prove this reverence, and ſubmiſſion, to be a natural and indiſpenſible *duty?* They are, ſeveral of them, *ſuch*, as require no depth of judgment to comprehend; but what *children* of all *ages*, who have arrived to a *capacity* of thinking and acting *morally*, may diſcern the *weight* of: And the *others* will appear, to have an undeniable *force*, to thoſe who are at all *uſed* to *reflection*. The *firſt* ſort of reaſons, and which are *obvious* to children, whoſe *faculties* are *open* to *diſtinguiſh* good and evil, but not yet come to *perfect maturity*, are,

'THAT the GOD, who gave them their being, their *ſupreme* and *heavenly father*, whoſe dominion is unlimited, and uncontroulable, has made them *ſubject* to their *earthly parents*, by the eſtabliſhed *law* and *order* of human nature: So that a *diſreſpectful carriage* towards them is, indeed, an offence againſt *nature*, an irreverence offered to GOD himſelf.'

AGAIN, they are, *naturally*, under the *protection* of their parents, who are to defend them from danger, and provide all

things neceſſary and convenient for them, 'and the *power*, ordained by nature to *protect*, muſt be *ſuperior* to thoſe, who are ordained to be *protected* by it. The protection afforded muſt not only claim a return of *gratitude*, but of *reverence*, and *honour*.'

ADD to this, that parents were not only *appointed*, by the infinite wiſdom of the GOD of nature, to be their childrens *guardians*, in the manner already mentioned; 'but are inveſted with an *authority*, to mould and fix their tender paſſions, and regulate the diſpoſitions and habits of their minds. But if parents were *generally* diſregarded, and treated with contempt (as they might, indeed, be *univerſally*, if it was lawful and allowable in any *ſingle* inſtance) they would, probably, be *diſcouraged* in exerciſing thoſe offices of *affection* and *prudent care*, on which not only the *good*, but the *very continuance*, of the human ſpecies, in a great meaſure depends.'

OTHER rational grounds, of reverence and honour to parents, are——'that, in *families*, the *firſt manners* of *ſociety* are formed; that they are a kind of *ſeminaries*, in which perſons are deſigned to be trained up, according to the various ranks and diſtinctions of mankind, for *uſe* and *ſervice* in the *greater world*; and that theſe excellent purpoſes cannot poſſibly be anſwered, if family *order* be not *preſerved*; nor can the leaſt *ſhadow* of *order* be maintained, if the *authority* of *parents* is not reverenced, and ſubmitted to.' I have choſen to join *ſubmiſſion* to *reverence*, becauſe, in the preſent caſe, it is a natural conſequence, and one of the trueſt demonſtrations, of it: And I diſtinguiſh ſubmiſſion from *obedience*, and range it under another head, becauſe it is poſſible,

poſſible, that *ſubmiſſion* may be ſhewn in many reſpects, where there is no *command* given, and conſequently, where, in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, there can be no *obedience*.

IT is now proper to enquire, how this reverence and ſubmiſſion to parents is, in general, to be *expreſſed*; and what are the *proper meaſures* of it. And to this I anſwer——'that the *manner* of expreſſing it will differ ſomething, according to the *age* of children, and the *degree* of their *ſubjection* to, and *dependance* on, their parents. Thoſe who are *incapable* of *chooſing* for themſelves, and want ſufficient *ſtrength* of *reaſon*, to direct and regulate their own behaviour, are bound to a more *abſolute* and *implicite* ſubmiſſion, than others, who are grown up to ſome *ripeneſs* of age and underſtanding, though ſtill continuing, as being a part of *their family*, under the more immediate *tuition* and *government* of their parents. And theſe, again, are obliged to *ſubmit*, in ſeveral inſtances, where it cannot be rationally *required* of ſuch, as have *diſtinct families*, under their *own care* and *regulation*; and who, their *circumſtances* being, upon that account, in a great meaſure *altered*, muſt, of courſe, be in a more *free* and *independent* way of life.'

BUT, notwithſtanding what has been now ſaid, the more material expreſſions of reverence and ſubmiſſion will remain, in *general*, very nearly the ſame. 'It is incumbent on all, without exception, to treat their parents with all due *outward marks* of honour; to comply, as far as is *poſſible*, with their inclinations; never, when they are obliged to *diſſent* from their judgments, to do it with an air of *pride*, and *obſtinacy*; to *yield*, in all debates about *indifferent* matters, when they ſee them peremptory and determined in their opinions, rather than provoke, and raiſe their paſſions,

paſſions, by *ſtiffneſs*, and a *contemptuous oppoſition*; and, in every age of life, not to affect an air of *abſolute independency*, or put themſelves upon the foot of a ſtrict *equality* with their parents; but to bear with their *infirmities*, and attend to their *counſels*, and *admonitions*, with *modeſty*.'

And this part of their duty, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that children, in general, will readily perform, if *parents* rightly diſcharge *their* duty. 'Would they be reverenced, as their *place*, and *character*, and *ſuperiority* demand—— let them reverence *themſelves*, and ſtudy to maintain their *dignity*, by being *temperate* in their paſſions, and *diſcreet* and *irreproachable* in their conduct. Let them not render their own rank *mean*, and *deſpicable*, by capriciouſneſs and levity; by a weak, variable, inconſiſtent temper; by being guided, chiefly, by unaccountable humours, and ſudden ſtarts of fancy; and appearing to have no uniform and ſteady rule of action. Let them not, by manifeſting a want of *reſolution*, upon all proper occaſions, to *aſſert* their authority, and *quell* ſtubborn oppoſition to it, encourage inſolence, and put the *reins* of *government* out of their own hands.'

But I diſmiſs this head, and go on to another branch of that *reſpect*, which our parents have a natural right to claim from us ——'and which conſiſt in *concealing*, or *extenuating*, their imperfections, ſo far as juſtice, and the truth of things, will admit of. Not to make this *ſmall return*, for the great and important benefits which we have received, muſt argue a moſt ungrateful and degenerate diſpoſition. It is a debt we owe to a *common friend*, nay, in ſome meaſure, to a *ſtranger*; and ſhall we deny it to thoſe, to whom we ſtand in one of the firſt of all *human relations*,

relations, and are united by the ſtricteſt and cloſeſt *ties? Reaſon*, and all principles of *virtue* and *honour*, muſt then have forſaken us, and have left us quite ſtupified, and inſenſible of moral obligations.

BUT if inſtead of acting, in the manner which I have above deſcribed, we *join* in *reproaching* our parents, and *voluntarily expoſing* either their *indiſcretions*, or *vices*, this is ſuch *unnatural* wickedneſs, as muſt render us juſtly, and univerſally, *deteſted*. This crime, on account of its *heinous* guilt, is repreſented, in the holy Scriptures, as what renders us liable to the peculiar diſpleaſure of almighty GOD: And for *thus publiſhing* and *ridiculing*, inſtead of concealing and covering, his father's *nakedneſs* and *ſhame*, was *Ham*, the ſon of *Noah*, devoted, by a wiſe decree of providence, to a very ſignal and remarkable judgment; which did not terminate in his *own perſon*, but, in its natural conſequences, extended to his *poſterity*.

I SHALL only add, that let children be influenced by ever ſo high a ſpirit of *generoſity*, and diſcharge their duty, in this reſpect, with the utmoſt *exactneſs*, it would ſtill be infinitely better, for parents not to render ſuch a *palliation* of their *faults*, and *defence* of their *honour*, in any degree *neceſſary*: Becauſe neither the world in general, nor their children in particular, can retain a thorough *eſteem* of them in their minds, while their behaviour is ſuch, as ſtands in need of *excuſes*, and laboured *apologies*.

THE next part of the *honour* and *regard*, which is to be ſhewn to parents, is this——'that, whenever it is wanted through a decay of their worldly ſubſtance, the infirmities of age, or any other

other of the incident misfortunes and calamities of life, we afford them, in proportion to our *ability* and *rank*, a *competent*, *eaſy*, and *honourable ſubſiſtence*.' This is an act not of mere benignity, not a free and voluntary office of charity; but a branch of *gratitude*, and *juſt retaliation*. St. *Paul*, therefore, has repreſented it as a great duty of religion, and unchangeable morality, when he ſays, *if any widow have children——let them learn firſt to ſhew piety at home, and to requite their parents: For that is good* [*intrinſically*, and in its *own nature, good*] *and acceptable before* GOD*.

AND our bleſſed Saviour, in a very remarkable paſſage (in the 15th chapter of St. *Matthew*'s goſpel) has expreſsly included *this caſe*, within the *intention* and *ſcope* of the fifth commandment. His words are——GOD hath *commanded, ſaying, honour thy father, and thy mother; and he that curſeth father, or mother, let him die the death. But ye*, hypocritical *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, ye *Apoſtates*, not from religion only, but nature, lay ſo little ſtreſs on this eternal and ſacred law of the DEITY, that ye are not aſhamed to declare, and teach publickly, that *whoſoever ſhall ſay to* his *father, or* his *mother*, It is *a gift, by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me* [*i. e.* if any man ſhall have bound himſelf, by a ſolemn *impious vow*, not to *relieve* his parents *neceſſities*, or has *ſuperſtitiouſly conſecrated* to *pretended* religious uſes, what ought to have been *applied* to their *ſupport* and *maintenance*] he ſhall be free, notwithſtanding he *honoureth not his father*, or *his mother* †.

HERE it is moſt obvious, that the cenſure of *Chriſt*, paſſed on this vile perverſion of the law of GOD, implies, as the very

* 1 Tim. v. 4. † Matth. xv. 4, 5, 6.

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foundation of it, that thoſe who refuſed (whether from motives of *falſe religion*, or of *covetouſneſs*, and *luxury*, it makes no difference) that thoſe, I ſay, who refuſed to allow a *ſubſiſtence* to their parents, in proportion to their capacity and fortune, did not yield them *neceſſary honour*. Maintenance, therefore, muſt be eſſentially included in it; or, otherwiſe, it might have been paid (which, our Saviour aſſerts, it could not be) notwithſtanding they were *deficient* in this article. And reaſon itſelf ſtrongly ſpeaks the ſame language, *viz.* that to ſay to parents, *we honour you*, without affording them, when it is in our power, the means of *eaſy* and *honourable living*, is like the inſtance, St. *James* * has given of a rich man, who has many ſuperfluities, ſaying to the naked, and hungry, be ye *warmed*, and *filled*, though he *gives them not thoſe things, which are needful* for their bodily wants. It is, in both caſes, either moſt ſenſeleſs, or moſt impudent, *mockery*; an inſult on the *diſtreſſed*, and a ridiculing *charity* and *juſtice*.

THE *exact proportion*, indeed, which ought to be ſet apart for theſe great purpoſes of *filial duty*, no moraliſt can preciſely fix: But if it be *penurious*, and greatly *inadequate* to our circumſtances, we may be ſure in general, that GOD will not regard it as an act of *virtue*, and it muſt, in itſelf, be a *vile* and *deſpicable* offering. 'And this I will venture to affirm, that if while we are *laviſh* in the purſuit of *pleaſure*, and while we wanton in a *profuſion*, and *exceſs*, of worldly *pomp* and *ſplendor*, we content ourſelves with aſſigning, to our parents, but a *ſtrait* and *bare* ſubſiſtence, our *duty* appears, undeniably, to be the *laſt*, and *very loweſt*, conſideration, that weighs with us: And if, at any

* James ii. 16.

time, we are *aſhamed* to be *ſeen* with our parents, on account of the *meanneſs* of their *habit*, and *general accommodation* (which is a *baſeneſs* of mind, beyond my power fully to deſcribe) it can only be, either becauſe our *pride* has ſwollen us up to vain and high *conceits*, above our *true condition*; or our *avarice*, and *ſordidneſs* of temper, have *hardened* our hearts againſt the dictates, againſt the reverend and ſoft impreſſions, of *nature*.'

THE LAST head to be conſidered is, 'the *obedience*, due from children to their parents.' ——To treat of this diſtinctly and clearly, and in ſuch a manner, that what ſhall be offered may be applied readily, and without confuſion, to the moſt important caſes, which may happen in the courſe of parental government, is a matter of no ſmall difficulty; and, accordingly, the beſt moraliſts have, eſpecially in their *application* to *caſes* that occur, and, in ſome degree, as to the *extent* of the *obedience* itſelf, determined variouſly. 'The *conſtitutions* and *cuſtoms* of countries, fixing the *ſtandard* of what is, in this reſpect, decent and fit, *differ*. The *very rule* of right conduct is oftentimes *perplexed*, and requires ſedate judgment, and calm deliberation, to *adjuſt* it. And *fancy* and *paſſion*, always blind, wild, and ſtubborn, aſſerting their right to *decide*, thruſt *reaſon* out of its native ſeat of *judgment*.'

IT is, in an eſpecial manner, the nature of paſſion and obſtinacy to propagate themſelves: 'And, from hence, ariſe *aggravated* claims on both ſides; demands of *extravagant abatements* on the one hand, in proportion to the *exceſs*, of *rigidneſs* and *exaction*, on the other.' So that as nothing ſo ſtrongly inclines the parent, fond of power, and the oſtentation of it, to ſtretch his authority even to *tyranny*, and till it becomes quite

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odious and *inſupportable*, as the perverſe, and contemptuous, carriage, of an inſolent, undutiful child; there is ſcarce any thing, which ſo certainly engages children, diſpoſed to be licentious, and wiſhing to get rid of all controul, in ſchemes of *diſobedience*, and *oppoſition* to the *real authority* with which they are inveſted by GOD, as the ſevere and cruel government of indiſcreet and arbitrary parents.

THE point, therefore, muſt be cooly ſtated, and reduced, in the caſe of each, to a rule of *propriety* and *moderation*; becauſe, when things are puſhed to *extremes*, they will of courſe diſſolve and break, and defeat, their own fond purpoſes, at the ſame time that they ſubvert the wiſe order of nature. 'For it cannot, in reaſon, be expected, that the *authority* of parents will be *honoured*, or, indeed, that it will long *ſubſiſt*, when it is not their own *proper authority*, but an *uſurpation*; or, that the *obedience* of the child will be *free*, *chearful*, and *conſtant*, when it ceaſes to be a *juſt* and *limited* obedience, and is converted into a ſtate of *oppreſſion*, and *ſlavery*.'

SAINT *Paul*, indeed, has urged this branch of filial duty, as an unalterable tie and obligation of *nature*, as well as of *Chriſtianity*: And he has done it, too, in the largeſt and moſt extenſive terms; as if it was a conduct ever *uniformly* and *inflexibly* the ſame, or that could, upon no occaſion whatever, be *diſpenſed* with. For thus he directs——*Children obey* your *parents*, *in* ALL *things* *. But it muſt be remembred, that the exhortation cannot fairly be underſtood in the ſame latitude, with the words *all things* abſolutely and ſtrictly conſidered; becauſe *the*

* Col. iii. 20.

all things, here ſpoken of, are of neceſſity *limited*, by being *reſtrained* to a *particular ſubject*. It is not the *importance* and *force* of the phraſe itſelf, but the *nature* of the caſe to which it *relates*, that is the juſt *meaſure* of obedience, and the true *rule* of interpretation.

And this the reaſon, the common ſenſe, of mankind, in almoſt all other *parallel* inſtances, will readily admit. They univerſally allow a *greater* or *leſs ſcope* to the *ſenſe* of the *ſelf-ſame* expreſſions, according to the *quality*, or from the *different reaſons*, of the particular ſubjects, to which they are applied. 'Thus, ſhould it be ſaid——*be juſt to all*, or, *render to* every one *his due*——it muſt plainly appear, that, here, it is not from the mere abſtract ſenſe of the words *every one*, but from the nature of the *duty itſelf* required, that we judge the exhortation to be *univerſal* and *abſolute*: Becauſe when we read——*give to* every man *that aſketh of thee*——though the latitude of *expreſſion* be the ſame, yet the latitude of *meaning* neither is, nor can be, the ſame. The *reaſon* of the injunction, in the latter inſtance, equally forces us to *reſtrain* it within certain *bounds*, as it did, in the former, to admit the direction to be *unlimited*.'

So again, 'if it be equally the ſubject of a command, to *obey* God, *parents*, *magiſtrates*, *maſters*, *in* all *things*, there is no way to prevent theſe different precepts, from incurring the charge of a *contradiction* and *inconſiſtency* utterly irreconcileable, unleſs it be by allowing, that there is but *one* authority, which is *ſupreme* and *abſolute*; and *enlarging*, or *reducing*, the *obedience* in each particular, according to the natural juſt *order*, and *rank*, of ſuperiority. Beſides, if there is but *one ſupreme*, all the other *powers*, being *derived* and *ſubordinate*, muſt, from their very nature,

nature, be *limited*; and all limitation of *power* neceſſarily infers, in an equal degree, a reſtriction and limitation of *obedience*.'

FROM all which premiſes it is undeniably certain, that the Apoſtle's exhortation to *children*, above-mentioned, can poſſibly mean no more, than that they ſhould be *obedient* to their *parents* in *all* caſes, which lye within the proper *ſcope* and *influence* of parental authority; or, in other words, in *all things*, which they can *reaſonably* and *fitly* require. It may, perhaps, be oftentimes prudent, and beſt upon the whole, to *yield* (when nothing is inſiſted upon, that is abſolutely *evil*, or that interferes with a *ſuperior tie*) though there be, ſtrictly ſpeaking, no *right* to demand obedience: And there neither is, nor can be, ſuch an intrinſic right in *any authority*, when it *exceeds* the *bounds*, preſcribed and fixed for it in nature, and is *arbitrarily* and *wantonly* exerciſed.

ADD to all this, that the very ſame general account, and explanation, of the ſubject may be fairly deduced from St. *Paul*'s ſaying, with a view to *enforce* the *obedience* of children (as he had before deſcribed the *extent* of it) that it was *well-pleaſing unto the Lord* *. 'For could ſuch an *unlimited* obedience, as confounded all the *natural differences* of things, all *powers*, all *claims*, be acceptable to that infinite wiſdom, which *ſaw*, which *approved* of, which itſelf *ordained*, thoſe outward *diſtinctions*, from whence different rules of conduct muſt, always, neceſſarily ſpring? Can it be agreeable to him, upon the ſole ground of *words*, literally, and without reaſon, interpreted, to introduce *diſorder* into the *moral*, *ſocial*, part of his creation, and

* Col. iii. 20.

ſubvert

ſubvert the eſtabliſhed ſchemes of his providential government?'

THE ſame Apoſtle therefore, in his epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, has *varied* the form of the exhortation thus: *Children, obey your parents in the Lord,*——i. e. ſo far, as is conſiſtent with that high veneration, which, as *profeſſors* of the *Goſpel*, ye owe to *Chriſt*, and, as *men*, to the *ſupreme parent* and *ruler* of all intelligent beings; in *every thing*, that is an *inſtrumental part* of his univerſal government, in nothing *beneath*, or *beyond*, it.

SHOULD it be inquired, farther, why the univerſal obedience of children, to which St. *Paul* intended to exhort, is repreſented as a thing *well pleaſing to* GOD; he himſelf has immediately given the direct, and the only pertinent and ſatisfactory, anſwer that could be given, *viz.* that *this is right* *. In the reaſonable, equitable, and gracious government, even of the ſupreme *monarch* of the world, nothing is *enjoined*, but *becauſe* it is *right*, nothing *accepted*, as a mark of *due reverence* and *honour* in the *ſubject*, but what is *performed* from a *ſenſe* of its being *right*. But is it right in children to *obey without reſerve?* Here let us heſitate, and fix our *ground:* And, upon this general foundation, let us proceed to conſider, more diſtinctly, what are the juſt *meaſures* of parents *authority*, and, of conſequence, the juſt *limitations* of childrens *obedience*.

THAT there is a *real* authority lodged in parents, the frame of nature (as we have already ſeen) plainly indicates; and all nations, and ages, of the world have acknowledged it. There

* Eph. vi. 1.

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are images and faint copies of it (ſo far as relates to the preſerving, and training up, their young to a ſtate of maturity, and aptitude to provide for themſelves) throughout the *animal* world. To *them* is aſſigned (and it is an inſtinct deeply fixed, and impreſſed on their ſeveral natures) the care of guarding, and nurturing, the tender helpleſs ſtate of *animal* life; and of *inſtructing*, too, in *thoſe offices*, which are neceſſary for the *ſupport* of the *ſpecies*.

'But *authority* differs greatly from *inſtinct*; and muſt have *reaſon* both as its *foundation*, and *guide*. *Man* alone, therefore, in the external viſible world, being advanced to this *rank*, and endowed with the *capacities* for a *voluntary wiſe* adminiſtration and government, can be properly ſaid to be entruſted with *authority*.' And, without admitting this authority, in *parents*, to be an indiſpenſable *right*, derived from *nature*, there is no proviſion left for the *regular* and *decent* education of children——in a manner *ſuited* to their *moral* powers; to their *ſocial* propenſities and affections; or to their peculiar *ſituation*, and *order*, in the *ſcale* of human life.——'Thus the moſt important *end* of inſtitutions of *family goverment* (which is the cultivation and improvement of the human race, and continuing its *ſucceſſive deſcent*, with *uſefulneſs* and *honour*, throughout all generations) is, in a great meaſure, *defeated:* And, in conſequence of this, all *other ſocieties* are likely, in time, to *diſſolve*.'

But, beſides this, it is highly worthy of notice, that the education of children, from whence *parental authority* derives its chief ſanction, is enforced on mankind, with diſtinguiſhed weight and energy of reaſon, by 'the *ſingular conſtitution* of human nature.' The ſeveral tribes, of *animals*, *ſoon* arrive to that

ſtate

ſtate of *perfection*, which is neceſſary for the future ſupport and regulation of their lives; ſo as to anſwer, *completely*, the end of our common creator. 'But *man*, as a more refined and elaborate work of GOD, arrives at this point but *ſlowly*.' His defenceleſs condition laſts much *longer*, than the entire ſenſitive *exiſtence* of many other creatures; and his inability, to provide for himſelf, is vaſtly *greater*. This is a demonſtration that GOD intended, that the *parent*, *man* (by the exerciſe of due benevolence, and tenderneſs towards his off-ſpring) ſhould raiſe *moral habits*; while the other creatures, inferior to him, are mechanically, and without thought or virtue, influenced to fulfil nature's laws. 'And after *reaſon* has firſt began to diſplay itſelf in *looſe languid eſſays*, and *caſual incidental mimickries* of wiſdom, and ſound judgment, it lingers and is long *detained* in this ſchool of *trifles*; before it is capable of diſcerning points of ſolidity and moment——relating to *itſelf*; to thoſe in the *ſame ſtation*; to others of a *different rank*, and *character*, in human nature; and to the *common father* of all.'

To prevent the evils, that will naturally reſult from theſe things, *romantic* ſchemes, if *fathers of our country*, may, indeed, be aſſigned in *theory*: 'But, unleſs the *plan* of *policy*, in almoſt all nations, be entirely *changed*, and juſt and honourable, rather than ſervile partial, *views* of *public adminiſtration*, be *purſued* as the invariable rule of conduct; an *improper*, *unnatural*, education, and the *deſpotic confuſion* of all *private property*, are moſt likely to be the *conſequence*. And, thus, *juſtice* itſelf will be converted into a mean *tool* of *political intereſt*.' So that this general concluſion remains, I think, ſtill plain and indubitable, *viz.* that parents are inveſted with an authority over their children, that is *natural*, and, upon the whole, *unalienable*.

BUT

BUT it muſt fully appear, from what has been before, incidentally, ſuggeſted on this head——that if there be any *ſacred inflexible* ties of ſocial morality, if there be, in nature, any *prior* obligations, if there be any *ſuperior* power, *this authority* of parents muſt, of neceſſity, be *circumſcribed.*——The rules, for conducting the exerciſe of it, cannot, in the nature of things, be *abſolute:* Nor, whatever *deference* they may, in *prudence*, demand, in virtue of the *cuſtoms* or *laws* of particular countries, can they, on that account, be deemed inviolable; becauſe theſe cuſtoms and laws are mere *human* ordinances, and conſequently, all *fallible.* 'Accordingly we find, that even in the morals of the ancient *Roman* ſtate, ſo highly extolled, and ſet in oppoſition to *Chriſtian* precepts, for ſcarce any other reaſon but that the *latter* are *Chriſtian*; we find here, I ſay, that expoſing *children* to *ſale*, upon the foot of *other branches* of a man's *property*, and as *ſlaves*, by *nature*, has been admitted and eſtabliſhed as a *law:* And, upon the ſame foundation, *other inſtitutions* have, likewiſe, been introduced, equally *repugnant* to reaſon, and nature.' Let us now go on to ſtate, more particularly, the meaſures of *parental* authority, and the juſt limitations of *filial* obedience.

AND, FIRST, 'It muſt be *confined* (in both caſes) to things that are, in their own nature, *lawful* and *fit*; otherwiſe, it makes all religion and morality *ſelf-deſtructive*, by being a *contradiction* to itſelf.' The law of nature is an *univerſal* tie; and it is, therefore, impoſſible, that any *particular branch*, of this law, ſhould diſſolve and evacuate the *whole.* No *one* article of *right* ought to be ſo interpreted, as to undermine *all right:* But,

on the contrary, all parental *powers* are, in their nature, *ſubordinate* to the univerſal dictates of *equity*.

AGAIN, 'the authority of parents ought to be *diſclaimed*, not only when it contradicts a determinate and expreſs conſtitution of *nature*, but when it oppoſes any rule of *revealed religion*, apprehended, and acknowledged, *as ſuch*.' Otherwiſe, we directly renounce our obedience and duty to GOD, and, in effect, aſſert, that there are *other indications* of his will, more *important* and *credible* than what, we ourſelves acknowledge, to be *his own explanation* of his will; who framed the whole ſyſtem of nature, and adapted it, in every part, to its peculiar purpoſes.

THIRDLY, 'in matters relating to *conſcience*, children neither *are*, nor *can be*, abſolutely ſubject to the *command*, and *impoſition*, of their parents.' Indeed, in their tender years, and *want* of *capacity* to judge for themſelves, they are, *ſo far* as this inability extends, entirely under the management, and controul, of their proper *natural ſuperiors*. *Parents* may have a right to command (from the *uſefulneſs* of public worſhip *in general*, to ſupport all moral *virtues*, all regular and orderly ſociety) their outward attendance on the *particular forms*, which they themſelves chiefly *approve*: But, when children are capable of reaſoning, and judging, for *themſelves*, this is a *barbarous* and *tyrannical* impoſition.

FOR to *conſtrain* any one, who ſcruples the *lawfulneſs* of it, to conſent to my ſpeculative creed, or acquieſce in my outward forms of religion, againſt *his conſcience*, is forcing him to violate the *integrity*, and *innocence*, of his mind. And, if any parent, either

either through ignorance, or uſurpation of power, acts this *unnatural* part, he is, *virtually*, a rebel againſt GOD; from whom his own authority is derived: He, in a manner, impoſes upon his children the *practice*, and, in conſequence of this, the *habit* of *diſſimulation* in all *common* affairs; and may be ranged, among the moſt pernicious *corrupters* of their *moral character*.

FARTHER, 'when *parents* require, of their *children*, things that are evidently *hurtful to them*, *upon the whole*, the *latter* can be under no obligation, to *comply* with their *injunctions*:' Becauſe the parents authority, like that of all others, could never be intended to gratify the inordinate views of a *proud* and *inflexible* temper; but for the *advantage*, and *welfare* of thoſe, who are *ſubjected* to it. I ſay things *hurtful in themſelves*—— becauſe children will be apt to imagine, as general experience teaches, that they are intolerably *injured*, even by acts of neceſſary care and circumſpection; ſuch as the *controul* of *foppery*; the *confining* them to *buſineſs*, where there is an idle vain diſpoſition; and the like. 'This is too much the *reproach*, and *bane*, of the preſent age; and will, I fear, through the too *eaſy tradition* of impertinence, ſuperficial knowledge, and awkward, inconſiderate, indecent manners, be the *lamentation* of poſterity.'

ANOTHER rule, which has been preſcribed, by almoſt all writers on the law of nature and nations, to *bound* parental authority, is this, 'that what, the *parent* enjoins, muſt be conſiſtent with the *public regulations*, and *laws*, of our *country*.' And thus, without doubt, it *ought* to be, when the laws of our country are *reaſonable* and *juſt* laws: Otherwiſe, both *parents* and *country* are aliens from nature, from the community of mankind, and from the government of GOD.

'If the *laws* of our country preſcribe *uniformity* of *opinion*, or univerſal *conſent* in *one mode* of *worſhip*, which *nature* declares to be *impoſſible*; or if they command me to *aſſiſt* in any *breaches* of juſtice, or in any offices of *violence* and *perſecution*; which has ſometimes been the caſe, even in our own land, to the reproach of the virtue, and honour, of this *brave* and *generous* nation (who ought, therefore, to *deteſt* the *memory* of thoſe *luxurious oppreſſive* princes, in whoſe reigns ſuch acts of violence were firſt eſtabliſhed:') In theſe, and all other, caſes of a like kind, our duty is moſt evidently this, to follow the *dictate* of *reaſon*, and not the *luſt* of *power*; and to *obey* God, rather than *degenerate* and *ſavage* man.

But, in all inſtances, which are either uſeful or innocent, the public laws muſt be *preferred*, to the contrary injunctions of parents: 'Becauſe *families*, however important or numerous, are but *parts* of larger *civil ſocieties*; and therefore, with the *exceptions* before claimed, their government and orders muſt be of *inferior* weight.'

And from theſe general principles, *viz.* that the *authority* of *parents* was intended to enforce, only what is *fit* in itſelf; that it is not deſtructive of the *natural rights* of children; that it could not be deſigned to force *conſcience*, or oppreſs *private judgment*; and that the ultimate ſcope of it ought to terminate, in the *mutual happineſs* of parents and children: We may certainly, I ſay, collect from theſe premiſes, 'that it can be no juſt part, of parental authority, to force children to a perpetual *vow* of *celibacy*; but that all ſuch ſchemes may, and ought to, be *oppoſed* to the utmoſt of our power; becauſe they are a manifeſt

feſt contradiction to nature, and to ſome of its unqueſtionable, and moſt ſtrongly implanted, *paſſions*. They raiſe a violent *diſguſt* to religion, on account of its monſtrous ſeverity; 'and inſtead of ſecuring greater *ſimplicity*, and *chaſtity* of manners, tempt, in the moſt effectual and irreſiſtible manner poſſible, to *incontinence*; nay, to unbridled exceſſes of *ſenſual impurity*.'

And, Finally, 'in the article of *marriage* (as the contracting parties are here, in reaſon, to be ſuppoſed, to have arrived to ſome maturity of *age*, and *underſtanding*) parents, I think, ſhould ſeldom exert any acts of *power*, but chooſe, in general, rather to *perſwade*.'——It is ſcarce ever adviſeable, to attempt to *force* their childrens *inclinations*; much leſs, as the happineſs of the latter is chiefly concerned in this ſolemn ſtipulation, to *conſtrain* them, by the weight of *authority*, to any *alliances*, to which there appears to be a *rooted averſion*.——Parents ſhould contract no marriages, merely on principles of *avarice*, and *ambition*, for this moſt manifeſt and undeniable reaſon; that not *affluence* of wealth, not *eminence* and *ſplendor* of outward circumſtances, but *reciprocal tender love*, is the only durable ground of *conjugal felicity*.——And farther, they ſhould be always ready to diſpoſe of their children, in marriage, *properly* and *honourably*, and to devolve upon them, according to *their rank* in life, a *fit* and *ſuitable proportion* of their worldly ſubſtance; that, through the *penury* and *rigour* of their parents, they may not be tempted, by a *raſh* ſurrender of their perſons, to bargain for diſgrace and miſery: And, beſides, 'this laſt is nothing more than a *debt* of *ſtrict juſtice*; ſince *parents*, with reſpect to the *equitable diſtribution*, of *part of their eſtate*, juſt before mentioned, are not to be conſidered as *abſolute poſſeſſors*, but

but as *ſtewards*, entruſted for their children.' If, therefore, they would force them to marry, where there is quite an *indecent diſparity* of *age*; or where there is a *diſinclination* on private motives, which is never likely to be *conquered*; there is a great deal to be urged, from *rights* of *nature*, to *extenuate* ſuch inſtances, of childrens *ſeeming* diſreſpect and diſobedience.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the diſtinct obligations of maſters, *and* ſervants.

I AM now to begin to treat of *relations*, and the *mutual duties* neceſſarily reſulting from thence, which have not ſo ſtrict a *connexion* with the very idea, and firſt rudiments, of human ſociety, as the obligations of *huſbands* and *wives*, *parents* and *children*; but may rather be conſidered, as *ſecondary* and *conſequential* duties.

ACCORDING to the preſent conſtitution, and order of things, fixed by the unerring wiſdom of the great creator, the inſtitution of *marriage* was abſolutely neceſſary, to the propagation and ſupport of mankind, as a *regular* and *well ordered* ſociety; nor could the *continuance* of their *nature* be effected in any other way, ſo becoming the *dignity* of their *rank*, and their *prehemi-nence* of *reaſon:* Nor, again, could this ſacred rite anſwer its firſt and chief *deſign*, without introducing the *relations* of *parents* and *children*. Both theſe, therefore, are inſeparable, almoſt, from the character of *ſocial humanity*.——'But we can eaſily conceive of men in ſome ſtate of ſociety, before the diſtinct offices, and obligations, of *maſters* and *ſervants* (eſpecially as they are now underſtood) *had actually*, and, indeed, before it was poſſible they *ſhould have*, taken place.'

How-

HOWEVER, though it appears, from what has been ſaid, that the latter are but *ſubſequent* and *inferior* relations, 'yet they are plainly grafted on *nature*, and derived from the ſame *original root*.' For as there is a juſt ſenſe, in which all mankind are by nature *equal*, becauſe, if they had all been created *at once*, in *maturity* of ſtrength and underſtanding, *each* member of the whole would have had the ſame *right*, with *any other* ſingle perſon whatſoever, to *life*, to the *preſervation*, and *comfortable ſupport* of life, and, conſequently, an equal *property* in the *common ſtock* of nature, liberally provided and ordained for their uſe; and becauſe even *now*, and *for ever*, each individual, conſidered merely as *a man*, has an undoubted *claim* to the ſame *degree* of equitable and kind treatment, in the ſame *circumſtances*; as all this, I ſay, is moſt obvious, and, upon principles of right reaſon, inconteſtable: So, on the other hand, it is too evident to be denied, that the providence, of the ſupreme diſpoſer of all things, *deſigned* from the *beginning*, that as mankind increaſed, and multiplied into larger ſocieties, they ſhould be ranged into *different claſſes*, different *orders* and *degrees*, in a *ſubordination* to, and neceſſary *dependence* upon, each other.

'THIS variety of ſtations and offices may be ſtiled, in ſome meaſure, *accidental:* For thus it truly is *in general*, with reſpect to the *perſons themſelves*, who are fixed in *higher*, or *lower*, characters.' It aroſe at *firſt*, perhaps chiefly, from *greater*, or *leſſer*, *improvements* of the underſtanding; *extent* of uſeful knowledge; *diligence* and *application* to acquire a larger property; and *prudence* and *good oeconomy* to *preſerve* it——from whence naturally ſpring plenty, influence, and authority in *ſome*, and dependence, and ſubjection in *others*. Theſe *cauſes* will always continue,

continue, in many plain and viſible inſtances, to produce the ſame *effects*, and create the ſame *differences:* Which may, likewiſe, be frequently owing to *accidents* of *birth*, *family*, *friendſhips*, or a particular *advantageous ſituation* in life, that others are deprived of.

'AND men of ſuperior rank, and who are poſſeſſed of a larger ſubſtance, for their own *eaſe* and *better accommodation*, and to exempt themſelves from *meaner* and more *laborious* offices, will immediately find themſelves inclined, to procure the *attendance* and *ſervices* of others; which the more *indigent*, or leſs *fortunate*, muſt be often obliged to ſubmit to, to gain an honeſt and convenient ſubſiſtence.'

THIS is the *actual* courſe of nature, and flows from the *original* conſtitution of nature; it ſhould therefore be regarded, 'as *a part* of the GOD of nature's *wiſe plan*, for the more *perfect* regulation and government of mankind.' Various capacities of reaſon, different talents, ſituations, and advantages for attaining to a ſuperior degree, have been, from the firſt appointment of human nature, one of its *fixed* and *unchangeable laws*. It could, therefore, never be intended, that they ſhould all *aſpire*, nor was it poſſible they ſhould all *riſe*, to exactly the ſame rank; neither the order, nor ſtrength, nor happineſs, of ſociety can be *duly*, if *at all*, maintained, upon this fanciful arrogant ſcheme of an univerſal equality. But if *difference* of *circumſtances* be admitted as natural and fit, *ſervitude* muſt neceſſarily follow; and in proportion to the degree of *inequality*, will be the degree and extent of *ſervitude*. So that it may be as truly ſaid of *this*, as of *authority* and *government* itſelf, 'that it is *an ordinance of* GOD.'

But, here, it is highly proper to inquire, in order to curb the pride and inſolence of power, for what *purpoſe*, providence has contrived it, to be one of the *regular* and *ſtated orders* in human life? I ſpeak not now of the *general end* of its inſtitution, which, without doubt, was the *wiſer government*, and *greater good*, of the whole; but of the *peculiar deſign* of it, with reſpect to *maſters* and *ſervants* themſelves, who are the parties more immediately concerned.——'Could this be——in a being of infinite goodneſs——the *eaſe*, the *wanton luxurious* eaſe, of the one, at the expence of the others *miſery*? The ſtate, the pomp, and falſe grandeur of the *maſter*, to the diſhonour and oppreſſion of the *ſervant*? Could juſtice deal ſo *unequally*? Could wiſdom deal ſo *arbitrarily*?' No: A haughty contemptuous carriage, as if the inferior was of a diſtinct order of creatures; violations of mutual contracts, only becauſe there is a power to do wrong; depreſſing the weak and indigent; and exactions of a rigorous and cruel ſervice——are a direct contradiction to the rule, and example, of God's ſovereign dominion: And muſt therefore render, as the *greater tyrants* of the world, ſo the *petty tyrants* of families, *deteſtable* in his ſight, and objects of *infamy* to all the reaſonable, and generous, part of mankind.

Servitude, it was obſerved before, admits of very different *degrees*; but there are chiefly *two kinds* of it, to which all the reſt may be reduced. The firſt is what, ſome of the beſt writers on the law of nature and nations, have ſtiled *perfect*; the other *incomplete*, i. e. *free* and *voluntary* ſervitude. Thoſe, who are referred to the laſt claſs, are *hired* and *contracted ſervants*; and thoſe, under the firſt, *ſlaves*. Theſe were, generally, *captives* taken in war; or the *deſcendents* of ſuch, as were eſteemed a part

part of the conquerors *property*; or those, who had *sold themselves* to a perpetual servitude——Of whose *strength*, and *labour*, and *persons*, even to the inflicting *death* itself for grosser injuries, and more flagrant breaches of trust, their masters, in these old times of *tyranny* and *disgrace* to human nature, were allowed to have the entire *disposal*.

I WILL not pretend to determine absolutely, as concerning a point that is most certain and indisputable, that man, by nature, can have no right *ever* to *transfer* his *services* (within the general rules of virtue and religion) entirely to another; and shall, therefore, only assert, 'that such *perpetual*, even *voluntary*, servitude seems, to me, to be a plain *deviation* from the *general* scheme of the GOD of nature——who intended, that all his *reasonable* creatures should be *free*——*free*, indeed, in order to be *reasonable*——to exert the *capacities* of their nature without *reserve*——and enjoy its proper *happiness* without *limitation*, or *controul*.'

NOR shall I attempt to decide peremptorily, by laying down a rule adapted to all cases, 'upon the instance of *captives* in a *just defensive* war, in which the persons *enslaved* were the *aggressors*, without a *sufficient provocation* to proceed to this extreme of violence, and effusion of human blood. Here, without doubt, some *uncommon*, and *signal*, *reparation*, is but a necessary demand of *justice*: And even *self-preservation*, and *self-defence*, may require, that we *detain* the enemy under our power, to prevent a *continuance*, and *repetition*, of injuries. And, in order to this *detention*, and to maintain our *superiority*, when providence has visibly declared itself in our favour, some *abridgement* of the

natural liberties, and *rights*, of human nature may, oftentimes, be expedient and fit.'

But *generoſity*, I think, ought, even here, to interpoſe, and moderate the rigour of juſtice. Mildneſs and condeſcenſion, are infinitely more *becoming*, than a harſh and cruel treatment. 'And if we have reaſon to believe, that we may ſafely *confide* in the *fidelity* and *honour* even of the *captive*——to reſtore him to the *freedom*, and *immunities*, of a *man*, muſt raiſe, in the mind, a much more ſublime and exquiſite *pleaſure*; than to keep him *depreſſed* and *debaſed*, to the condition and imployments of a *ſlave*, for ever *ignominious* to *human nature*.' Let us only imagine, in the preſent caſe, what we *ourſelves* would think to be moſt *great* and *generous*, if we were in the like *abject* circumſtances; and *ſlavery* would be generally abhorred, and ſeldom find a place, in the *free-born*, and *heavenly* nature of man.

These remarks may ſuffice, with reſpect to inſtances of ſervitude, in which we, at preſent, have, for the moſt part, no concern.

'But, perhaps, it will be found, that the practice of *modern* times, in order to extend their *commerce* (which ought, in a proportionable degree, to propagate *benevolence*, and a more *univerſal ſenſe* of morality) is much more criminal, and a more outrageous violation of *natural rights*. Should we have read, concerning the *Greeks*, or *Romans* of old, that they *traded*, with *a view* to make *ſlaves* of their own ſpecies, whom, they certainly knew, that this would involve in ſchemes of *blood* and *murder*, of *deſtroying*, or *enſlaving*, each other, that they even fomented *wars*, and engaged *whole nations* and *tribes* in *open hoſtilities*

lities, for their own *private advantage*; that they had no *deteſtation* of the *violence* and *cruelty*, but only *feared* the *ill ſucceſs* of their inhuman enterprizes; that they carried *men like themſelves*, their *brethren*, and the *off-ſpring* of the ſame *common parent*, to be *ſold* like *beaſts of prey*, or *beaſts of burden*, and put them to the ſame *reproachful trials* of their ſoundneſs, ſtrength, and capacity for greater bodily ſervice; that quite forgetting, and renouncing, the *original dignity* of human nature, communicated to *all*, they treated them with more *ſeverity*, and *ruder diſcipline*, than even the *ox*, or the *aſs*, who are *void of underſtanding*——ſhould we not, if this had been the caſe, have naturally been led to deſpiſe all their *pretended* refinements of morality; and to have concluded, that as they were not nations deſtitute of politeneſs, they muſt have been entire ſtrangers to *virtue*, and *benevolence*.'

'But, notwithſtanding this, we ourſelves (who profeſs to be *Chriſtians*, and boaſt of the peculiar advantages we enjoy, by means of an expreſs revelation of our duty from heaven) are, in effect, theſe very untaught and rude Heathen countries. With all our ſuperior light, we inſtil into thoſe, whom we call *ſavage* and *barbarous*, the moſt *deſpicable opinion* of human nature. We, to the utmoſt of our power, weaken and diſſolve the *univerſal tie*, that binds and unites mankind. We practice, what we ſhould exclaim againſt, as the utmoſt exceſs of *cruelty* and *tyranny*, if nations of the world, differing in *colour*, and forms of government, from ourſelves, were ſo poſſeſſed of *empire*, as to be able to reduce us to a ſtate of unmerrited, and brutiſh ſervitude. Of conſequence, we ſacrifice reaſon, our humanity, our Chriſtianity, to an *unnatural ſordid gain*. We teach other nations to deſpiſe, and trample under foot, all the obligations of *ſocial*

cial virtue. We take the moſt effectual methods, to prevent the propagation of the *Goſpel*, by repreſenting it as a ſcheme of *power* and *barbarous oppreſſion*, and an enemy to the *natural* privileges and rights of men.'

PERHAPS all, that I have now offered, may be of very little weight to reſtrain this enormity, this aggravated iniquity, in our national *commerce:* However, I ſhall ſtill have the ſatisfaction, of having entered my *private proteſt* againſt a practice, which, in my opinion, bids that GOD, who is the GOD, and *father*, of the *Gentiles* unconverted to *Chriſtianity*, moſt daring and bold defiance, and ſpurns at all the principles, both of natural and revealed religion.

BUT though we wickedly, and from *degenerate* and *ſelfiſh* motives, concur in the deſign of *enſlaving* the people of other countries, the ſame dreadful ſcourge (through the mercy of heaven, in forbearing to execute the juſt law of *retaliation*) is not yet felt amongſt ourſelves. Servitude, in this land of liberty, and of mild propitious government, is for the moſt part, if not altogether, an *unconſtrained* and *voluntary* contract. And therefore the directions given to *ſervants*, even in the New Teſtament, muſt *now* bear ſomewhat of a *different* meaning, from what they did in the *firſt* age of *Chriſtianity*; when ſervants were, generally, *ſlaves*. The *Goſpel* juſtly conſidered, what was, at that time, the *real ſtate* of things. It made no alteration either in the *natural*, or *civil*, rights of mankind; or in eſtabliſhed property. This would have introduced univerſal confuſion, and have raiſed an unſuperable objection againſt its own authority, as if it ſubverted the laws of nations, and was intended to diſturb the public tranquility. 'Hence, obedience was,

was, in general, inculcated to *magiſtrates*, *poſſeſſed* of *authority*, if they attended, in *the main*, to the great *ends* of government; and reſpect and ſubmiſſion to *maſters*, *actually inveſted* with power. *Servants* are therefore directed to *obey*——*with fear and trembling* *, from a ſenſe of their maſters (though not in *reaſon*, yet by the *conſtitutions* and *laws* of their reſpective countries) deſpotic and extenſive dominion; and to perſiſt, ſteddily, in the diſcharge of this branch of their duty, *not only to the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward* †. But this is what, *contracting* ſervants can never be obliged to do, in an *equal* degree, whether from principles of religion, or equity.' So that the exhortations, in the new teſtament, muſt be *differently* explained, according to the nature and quality of the ſervitude itſelf, and the cuſtoms and uſages, that have prevailed in the different ages, and nations, of the world.——After this, which whether it be thought a digreſſion, or not, muſt be of great importance, and cloſely connected with the general ſubject of this diſcourſe; I beg leave to recapitulate, briefly, the general principles at firſt laid down, and to add ſome other remarks, as the proper introduction, to what ſtill remains to be conſidered.

I HAVE, then, already ſhewn, that though there are ſome *general rights*, belonging to human nature (ſuch as the rights of *conſcience*, and the claims of *humanity*, *benevolence*, and *equity*; which are abſolutely *unalienable*, and *common* to all) yet, it was plainly the original deſign, of the great contriver and maker of the world, that there ſhould be certain *differences* and *inequalities*, likewiſe in the outward condition of mankind.——That the true conſtitution of things is vaſtly various, and, indeed di-

* Eph. vi. 5. † 1 Pet. ii. 18.

verſified,

verſified, almoſt infinitely, in every one of theſe reſpects——of *capacity*, *genius*, *advantages*, *ſituation*, *temper*, and the like.—— That, from hence, neceſſarily ſpring *higher*, and *lower*, characters and offices; and that, among the reſt, the condition and quality of *a ſervant* may be juſtly derived from this root; ſince it would have been impoſſible (without the exerciſe of a miraculous power, to ſuſpend or alter the courſe of nature) but it *muſt* have reſulted from it.

I NOW add, that, in all probability, it would have been introduced, by other, merely *voluntary* and *moral* cauſes; whatever was the *general* rank firſt intended for man. If it was an *unequal* rank——it might have been *raiſed*, as we have ſeen, by *acquired* judgment, wealth, influence, friends, by a proficiency in uſeful arts, and an uncommon ſhare of application and induſtry; if more *uniform*, or more upon *a level*——it might have been *depreſſed*, and the uniformity *diſturbed* and *broken*, by *irregular* follies and paſſions, which are ever wild and headſtrong in their courſe, and tend to throw all things into diſorder. 'Indolence, itſelf, would have *ſunk* the man, whom *diligence* and *care* exalt; *profuſeneſs* would have *debaſed* the frugal: And, we all know, that there are many *luxuries*, which create a *dependence* of ſome upon others, in caſes, where (if the wiſe and wholeſome laws of nature had been ſtrictly adhered to) ſuch an event could *ſcarce* have happened; nay, which reduce, the unhappy extravagant, to ſuch *mean* and *hard* offices of ſervitude, as *very few* are driven to, in the loweſt *natural ſubordinations* of human life.'

BUT theſe things being, in a great meaſure, the effects of indiſcretion and vice, I have juſt thought proper to mention by

by way of *caution*; but not as *direct proofs*, that a ſtate of ſervitude is one of the *juſt regulations*, propoſed, at firſt, by infinite wiſdom, for the more *exact order*, and *better government*, of the world. The ill conſequences of *intemperate paſſion*, and *wilful corruptions* of human nature, can only ſhow us, in any caſe, what *diſgrace* and *miſery*, the ſupreme judge of right and wrong has been pleaſed to *connect*, as *reſtraints* of *terror*, with groſs failures in the diſcharge of our duty, and violations of his ſacred laws: But they can never point out to us, what is the *regular ſtate* of things. So that, upon the whole, the difference of reaſoning, in the two kinds of argument which I have now propoſed, is this——in the *one*, we ſee, to what *dependence* and *ſervitude* mankind may be reduced, by *ſubverting* the ſcheme of *nature*——from the *other*, we may juſtly infer, that *ſervitude* muſt have *taken place* in various degrees, if the *law* of *our creation* had been ever ſo punctually *obſerved*.

And, from the whole of what has been offered, it undeniably appears——that it muſt have *natural duties* attending it;——and that theſe muſt be equally *indiſpenſable*, with any *other* natural ties, incumbent on mankind; and *neceſſary parts* of all true religion: Or, in other words, which will ſet the matter in a clearer and fuller light——'that there can be *no religion*, without *virtue*; no *virtue*, without a *conſcientious obſervance* of *nature's laws*; no *conſcientious obſervance* of *nature's laws*, while we *neglect* the *duties* of our *peculiar* rank and character, *i. e.* our own *immediate* and *proper offices*, which we are directly ſtationed and appointed to perform; and, conſequently, that neither *ſervants*, nor *maſters*, can cultivate a ſerious *veneration* of God, or cheriſh the rational hope of his *favour*, while the *one* are

careless, corrupt, and fraudulent, and the *other* imperious, exacting, and tyrannical.'

But this leads me to enter, more particularly, into the subject: I, therefore, now proceed to discourse of the *servants* duty, under the following heads, *viz*——'That he should be *obedient*; *just* and *honest*; *frugal*; *orderly* in his *behaviour*; *submissive* and *respectful* in his carriage towards his master; not a *divulger* of *family-secrets*; that he ought not to *corrupt* the manners of the *children*, who are intrusted to his care and oversight, nor encourage them in *stubbornes*s and *disobedience*; that no pretence of a superior purity, and zeal with respect to religion, should make him, in the least, *rude* and *insolent*, or *careless* of his masters interest; and that, as the foundation of a faithful discharge of *all other* branches of his *relative* duty, he endeavour to form his mind, as much as possible, to *ease* and *contentment*, under his state of *servitude*, and an *entire submission* to the wise disposals of providence.' And, under each of these particulars, I shall endeavour to give an impartial summary of the *master*'s duty, in a kind of *contrast* to that of the servants; that by being jointly represented, and appearing together in one view, they may illustrate and enforce each other.

There are, *now* especially, very high and strong complaints of the *sloth*, *wastefulness*, *insolence*, and *luxury* of servants; and, in an age *like this*, there is reason to fear, that, in too many instances, there is a *just* foundation for such complaints. 'For can *servants* be expected, to be examples of *innocence* and *frugality*, while *corruption* and *excess* prevail all around them?' It were indeed to be wished, that *one rank*, at least,

leaſt, might keep itſelf entirely clear of the ſpreading *infection*: But what is in itſelf *deſirable* is one thing; what we may *reaſonably expect*, unleſs, with one conſent and effort, *all* could be induced to grow wiſer and better, is another. *Servants*, it may for the moſt part be preſumed, from their *education*, and fewer advantages to acquire *correct notions* of things, will follow the manners of their *ſuperiors*. In ſome, it may leſſen the uneaſineſs and fatigue of ſervitude itſelf, thus to *raiſe* themſelves, in imagination, *above* their *proper* character. Others, leſs *aſpiring*, or more *artful*, may hope to recommend and ingratiate themſelves, by ſuch an obſequious, ſlaviſh, though very *abſurd* mimickry. The greater part may follow *implicitely*, from the ſame principle, which makes the generality *err*, even in the *choice* of their *religion*; *viz.* that what is *moſt followed* is *right*.

But, however this be, I am ſure, that reformation, if it be any thing more than a pretence, if it be a *true mending* of the heart and life, muſt ſpring from a *higher* and more *influential* cauſe. And though I would not, in the leaſt, excuſe the faults and diſorders of *ſervants*, who, in point of intereſt, as well as from their peculiar ſituation in life, have *leſs* to plead for ſeveral kinds of *extravagance*; and whoſe dependent condition ſhould, eſpecially, teach them the virtues of *humility*, and a greater *circumſpection*; yet with what face of *juſtice*, with what *decency*, can *maſters* ſo loudly complain, when the unbecoming *familiarities* and *freedoms*, which they themſelves uſe towards them, encourage them to be *arrogant*; or their *own examples* prompt them to be *profane* and *diſſolute*. 'There is no poſſibility of reclaiming the *lower claſſes* of mankind, but by ſome *ſhow* and *affectation*, at leaſt, of virtue in the *higher*.'

ADD to all this, that ſervants alſo, whether it be from *reaſon*, or by way of *retaliation*, are apt, on their part, to complain. And their *complaints* have a right to be ſtrictly *canvaſſed:* Their *wrongs*, if they are real, it is the duty of all *men*, of all *Chriſtians*, (without exception) if they have been the *aggreſſors*, to *repair*. This reparation, without reſpect of perſons, or any diſtinctions of outward rank, muſt be *full*, and *adequate* to the circumſtance whatever it be. For if a man, a creature, a ſubject, of GOD be oppreſſed, the *righteous judge* will, doubtleſs, take impartial cognizance of the cauſe, *whether* he be *bond, or free* *. *The hire of the labourers* detained, and the *cries* of the defrauded ſervant, *enter into the ears of the Lord of hoſts* §.—Whether, and how far, the mutual upbraidings and accuſations are juſt; what is the true ſource of unreaſonable charges; what the ground of real errors; muſt be entirely ſubjected to his omniſcient tribunal. And the right method to be taken, either for preventing, or curing, all ſuch violations of mutual duty; the whole of this, I ſay, will be beſt ſeen, by repreſenting, briefly, the diſtinct obligations of *maſters* and *ſervants*, in the ſame immediate point of view: Which method of treating this particular ſubject, I have therefore preferred, though it may be ſomewhat different from that hitherto purſued, in my diſcourſes on relative duties.

THE FIRST branch, of the duty required of ſervants, is *obedience:* For, in general, obedience is moſt certainly due to all perſons inveſted with authority; but the peculiar *degrees* of it muſt neceſſarily differ, in proportion to the *juſt extent* of the

* Eph. vi. 8. § Jam. v. 4.

authority,

authority, in every instance. *Wives* are bound to be *in subjection* to their own *husbands*, as well as *servants* to their proper *masters*, and yet the *offices* of subjection must be, in most respects, different. A *diversity* must likewise be admitted, in the case of servants themselves. Not to mention the condition of absolute *slaves*, which is abhorrent to human nature; 'the obedience of *other servants* must be suitably regulated by the *express terms* of of the first *contract*, or the *tacit stipulation* necessarily included, in the rational *scope* and *design* of it. Here the master, who is the best judge of his own affairs, must often have a *discretionary* power. Things which appear, to the servant, to be some *stretch* of authority, nay wholly *foreign* from the professed design, and uses, of his particular occupation, may, perhaps, be absolutely *necessary*. He ought therefore, I think, always to submit, where nothing is required, which is directly *inconsistent* with his contract, nothing that evidently *degrades* him below his rank, and is arbitrary, oppressive, impious, or dishonest.'

But what, now, is the duty of *masters*, if they desire to be properly *obeyed?* The general substance of it is very easy to be comprehended, consisting in the following particulars, *viz.* 'to be equitable and gracious in *commanding*, candid in *censuring*, mild in *resenting*; and to enjoin such services, as are as *easy* as possible, and, in their direct consequences, plainly *beneficial* and *necessary*.' For the duties on both sides are, in the nature of things, inseparable. *Tyranny* operates *here*, as it has been before observed to do in *other* cases; it begets *stubbornness*, and a constrained, careless, reluctant service: And an *unsubmissive intractable temper* has as direct a tendency, to produce, in the superior, arrogance of power, and an inclination to oppress.

Indeed,

INDEED, so far as the *first* of those characters (within the just bounds and limits of his obligations) refuses to follow the *directions*, and execute the *orders*, of his master, he ceases to be a *servant*, and places himself in a quite different situation. So far as he is disobedient and obstinate, he can have *no right* to his masters *favour* and *protection*. For such perverse and inexcuseable conduct amounts to the same, as a direct *renunciation*, on his part, of the *mutual contract*: 'Since, in the reason of the thing itself, there can be no material difference between my *absolutely refusing* to obey, or *yeilding obedience* only in those instances, which best suit my fancy, laziness, or pride.'

THE same general reasoning holds true, likewise, on the *master's* side. If he debases his *hired servants* to mean indecent offices of *slavery*; if he is unreasonable in his *demands*, and denies them the *necessary accommodations*, which their station requires; if he detains, or defrauds them of, any part of their *wages*, because they are unable to defend themselves, against the scourge of insolent injustice——In all these cases, it is evident to universal reason, 'that he can no more from *nature*, and the *positive law* of GOD, than from the institutions of *civil government*, in this happy land of common right, and universal liberty; it is undeniable, that from *neither* of these, he can derive the least *just claim* to the diligence, care, observance, and respectful duty of those, whom he so unworthily abuses.'

THE servant, indeed, may still be inclined, through *fear*, and because he thinks it most *prudent* upon the whole, to suppress his discontent; and, on the other hand the full reward of service, after it becomes remiss and defective, may be continued for

for a while, through the *diſcretion* and *generoſity* of the maſter. This, on both ſides, may be the moſt fit and adviſeable conduct. But neither the *ſervice*, without the ſtipulated wages, nor the *punctual payment* of the *wages*, without an obedient and ſubmiſſive carriage, ought to be regarded as *a debt* of *equity*. Nay, farther, it is in effect an act of *injuſtice*, for the careleſs intractable ſervant to require his full hire; as well as in the ſordid avaritious maſter, to expect offices of exact care and obedience.

THE NEXT branch of indiſpenſable obligation, incumbent on ſervants, is 'to be *juſt* and *honeſt*.' This is one of thoſe eternal ties, that no authority, civil or religious, can *diſſolve* or *weaken*, and the wilful breach of which, no temptation can *excuſe*. Juſtice is an univerſal law, that binds equally, and without diſtinction, all intelligent beings throughout heaven and earth; and it is owing indiſcriminately, and immutably, to all (throughout the whole creation of GOD) who are capable of pleaſure and pain —— 'to *brutes*; to *ſlaves*; to *hired ſervants*; to *equals*; to *maſters*; to *magiſtrates*; to *ſuperior natures*, ſo far as we are made ſenſible of their degree, and operations; and to GOD, by the humble acknowledgment, and chearful homage of every rational nature, paid to him, who is the original ſource both of juſtice and mercy.'

THIS all-commanding law of juſtice is, as it were, the main pillar, that bears up the frame of the moral ſocial world; and the chief ſupport both of private property, and publick rights. The great GOD himſelf is always determined, by the unchangeable wiſdom and rectitude of his nature, to be juſt to all his creatures, to all the ſubjects of his vaſt and infinite monarchy: The *prince* is bound to diſpenſe ſtrict and impartial equity,

equity, to the meanest members of his government: The *father* to his children: The *master* to his servants: *Man* to man.

And shall the *servant*, above all others, claim *a licence* to be *unjust?* 'Is it not a perversion of the order of nature, equally *absurd* as wicked, for *inferior characters* to claim a privilege, which the very *highest* ought never to aspire to; *viz.* the *sole exemption* from the common law of all intelligent natures; the *sole liberty* to break through those eternal rules, which are the support of all virtue and order? If we judge from the constitution of nature, and the more depressed rank which they hold in the scale of rational beings,—this common law, and these eternal rules, must, by many circumstances, be rather the more powerfully urged and inforced upon their consciences; since a privilege, which involves in it the idea of distinction and preheminence, seems to be more properly assigned to the *higher*, than to the *lower*, orders.' And I have made this observation, to impress, upon the minds of servants, a strict and serious regard to every branch of justice; because this conduct, with respect to them, seems something like *a peculiar tie*; or rather, since no difference can be allowed, as to the *general obligation* itself, a *peculiar motive* to the observance of it.

Let me farther add, that injustice to a master has this strong aggravation attending it, that, to the guilt of unrighteousness in general, there is annexed that of the basest and most pernicious kind of iniquity——*fraud*, and *breach of trust:* That the bare *suspicion* of fraud, where it cannot be so circumstantially proved, as to fall under the censure of public justice, may fix an indelible *stain* on the servants *character*, and, consequently, has a natural tendency to reduce him to *straits* and *indigence:* Whereas, an unblemished

unblemiſhed and approved *integrity* will not only render him *beloved* and *reſpected*, and procure many *advantages*, to ſweeten and relieve his ſervitude; but may probably raiſe him, to a *higher* and more *independent* ſtation. So that what I am recommending, is not more plainly his indiſpenſable *duty*, as a *man*, and a *chriſtian*, than it is his intereſt in the preſent world; and the only ſolid ground of his hope of happineſs to eternity.

As to the particular branches of juſtice, required of *ſervants*, they are chiefly theſe three; *fidelity*, *frugality*, *diligence and induſtry*. In *fidelity* is neceſſarily implied 'that they fulfil, to the utmoſt of their power, *every part* of their *contract*; that they be always careful and ſtudious of their maſters *intereſt*, and tranſact the buſineſs, committed to their charge, with all the *diſcretion* and *exactneſs*, which they would think themſelves obliged to exerciſe, or ought in reaſon to exerciſe, in the management of their *own affairs*; that they conſult the maſters advantage in *every article* of *commerce*, with which they are *intruſted*, ſo far, I mean, as is conſiſtent with the prime and more important law of *equity*, to *all mankind*.' Beyond this they cannot go, without ſacrificing juſtice to *the whole*, to the imaginary rights of an *individual*; and deſtroying the foundation of all faith, and mutual confidence. If the *maſter* expects it, he muſt be a man of no *virtue* nor *honour*; if the *ſervant* complies with ſuch unreaſonable and wicked expectations, he muſt entirely forfeit his *honeſty*. And this he does likewiſe, in a flagrant manner, if he *defrauds* and *cheats* his maſter; or *connives* at extravagant profuſeneſs, or clandeſtine breaches of truſt, in other ſervants. And it concerns both maſters, and ſervants, ſtrictly to examine themſelves, and make a cloſe application, of what I have now offered, to their own principles and behaviour; as in

the presence, and under the intimate inspection, of GOD, with whom *there is no respect of persons* *.

AGAIN, in the general duty of justice, from *servants* towards their masters, *frugality* must, of necessity, be included. And this comprehends in it——'that they neither gratify covetous desires, nor indulge luxury and pride, at *his expence*, and to the *diminution* of his *substance*. Upon which account, and that they may have but little temptation to the commission of this crime, let them look upon it, as a part of the duty belonging to their *rank* as servants, to mortify carnal *vanity*, *arrogance*, and *avarice*: Which (till they are raised higher by honest and warrantable methods) are quite *ridiculous* and *stupid* vices in them, as being, not at all, the *natural off-spring* and *product* of their character.' This article of *frugality* also implies in it, that the *servant* take due care, that every branch of his master's commerce be carried on with as little *extraordinary charge* as possible; that he embrace every opportunity to *save*, *secure*, and *improve* to the utmost. For, so far as he is *entrusted*, he supplies the *place* of the master himself; and should, therefore, observe the very *same* rules and measures of *frugality*, as reason and prudence prescribe to him.

TO fidelity, and frugality——in order to support the character of *servants*, as friends to justice, must be added *diligence* and *industry*——'the performing the above-mentioned, and all other necessary offices, not as *men-pleasers*, but in *piety* and *simplicity* of heart †; acting with the same circumspection and care, in the *absence* of their masters, as under their *immediate eye*.'

* Eph. vi. 9. Col. iii. 25. † Eph. vi. 6.

And

And as an encouragement, to their giving this last proof of their *honesty*, let them seriously consider the advantages, of a course of *industry*, to themselves——to their *characters*, and as a *means* of acquiring a *habit* of industry, the natural way, ordained by providence, for rising to *prosperity* and *honour*——and to their *comfort* (especially if they act on principles of religion and virtue) as it will probably supply an uninterrupted fund of *present* satisfaction, and must exalt their prospects, with respect to their *future* being.

I SHALL only add, that another office of *justice*, necessarily belonging to the station of a *servant*, 'is a *decent* and *orderly* behaviour; that the *character* of the master be not dishonoured by his rudeness, indiscretion, and vice, nor his rules of *family-government* disturbed, or violated——and that the divulging *family-secrets*, incouraging children in *stubbornness* and *disobedience*, and endeavouring to *corrupt* their principles, and *instil* into them lewd and vicious dispositions, are flagrant breaches of his *trust*. But I forbear to inlarge farther, because these things cannot but be evident to every common understanding.

AND thus, upon the whole, I have endeavoured to shew, if the servant ought to be *obedient*——what kind of *treatment* of him is best adapted, to secure and enforce obedience; if *just*——*what* to teach him the strict rules and measures of justice; if *frugal*——to inspire good oeconomy; if *orderly*——to impress a strong sense of decency; if *industrious*——to encourage diligence. And the whole is founded on this general certain maxim: 'That all religious social obligation is a *chain* of duties; the breaking *one link* of which is, in effect, a *dissolution* of *the whole*.'

CHAP. VIII.

Of the inſtitution, and end, of Civil government: *Or, of the duties of* Magiſtrates, *and* Subjects.

IN this chapter, my chief aim will be to oppoſe *tyranny*; and ſhew the monſtrous abſurdity of thoſe pernicious maxims of *arbitrary government* which are ſubverſive of all *natural right*.

THE heart of man beats, by nature, moſt ſtrongly for *liberty*: And this feeling is ſo *univerſal*, *fervent*, *inſuppreſſible*, *generous*, and calculated, like the diffuſions of GOD's munificence and bounty, for the *good* of *the whole*, that it may reaſonably be deemed 'a *divine inſtinct*, and *impulſe*, in the human ſoul.' It is the peculiar *prerogative* of man's *reaſon*, and the *only ſoil*, in which it can be ripened and improved. A *conſtrained* virtue, and religion from *compulſion*, are manifeſt and flagrant contradictions.

'*Slavery* entirely defaces the image of GOD, that was, at firſt, ſo ſtrongly impreſſed and ſtamped on human nature; and renders the condition of mankind infinitely more *ignominous*, and more ſenſibly *deplorable*, than that of brute creatures: Whoſe rank of being generally requires, that they ſhould be ſubject to the abſolute *controul* of a ſuperior intelligence; and who being deſtined,

deſtined, by the GOD of nature, for *paſſive* ſervitude, have happily *no aſpirings* after freedom and independence. So that, upon this plan, the *arbitrary monarch* in the reaſonable, and thoſe, who are too *wild* or too *fierce* to be ſubdued in the animal, world, are the *only ſubjects* of GOD's univerſal government, that he ever *intended* ſhould taſte the ſweets of *liberty*: Or, in other words, the *weaker*, the more *uſeful*, and *innocent*, are, throughout all nature, utterly deſerted by providence, and given up as *a prey* to ravaging and oppreſſive power.' *Tyrants*, in themſelves, the objects of *horror* and *deteſtation*, beyond pain, poverty, or death; the *enemies* of GOD, who inſult, and ſet at defiance, the model of his ſupreme government; the *ſcourges* of nations; the *peſts* of all human ſociety; whom *piety*, and *mercy* to mankind in general, oblige us to oppoſe, and purſue if it be poſſible, and as far as there is any probability of ſucceſs, to their abſolute *deſtruction*; theſe aliens, I ſay, from humanity are protected from *reſentment*: Their violence is declared to be *irreſiſtible*, their ſovereign anointed cruelty to be *ſacred*.

BUT who could give them an *authority* to be thus oppreſſive, and inſolent? 'Not the *ſupreme ſource of power*, without denying himſelf, and diſhonouring his moral perfections: Not the *conſent of mankind*, who could never *voluntarily agree* to their own ſhame, and miſery. The powers they claim, therefore, muſt be all *uſurped*: And to ſay, that they ought not to be *controuled*, though there be a *ſuperior force*, that is able to reſtrain them within the bounds of honour and juſtice, is, in effect, to aſſert, that nature was intended and framed for *miſchief*, for *unneceſſary* and *wanton* miſchief; and all this with no other view, than to pamper the *oſtentation* and *luxury* of *power*, and raiſe *ſome*, above their *equals* by nature, to *trample upon* their *own kind*.' Such a conſti-

conſtitution as this, one would naturally expect, from a *capricious* or *malevolent* being; but to aſcribe it to the GOD of eternal *juſtice* and *mercy*, is moſt ſtrangely blaſphemous. If *revelation* ſupported ſuch exorbitant *claims*, which bid utter defiance to *reaſon*; no pomp of *miracles* could maintain its authority, or ſcreen it from the contempt of the wiſe, the generous, and the good.

HOWEVER, this is far from being the caſe: For the principles of the *Chriſtian* religion are equally repugnant to *tyranny* in the governors, and to *ſedition* in the ſubjects. This is the deſirable *mean*, to preſerve *ſtrict liberty*, without *licentiouſneſs*, and *ſtrict order*, without *incroaching* on natures rights. But there were *peculiar reaſons* for enforcing, in the warmeſt manner, *ſubmiſſion* and *obedience* to magiſtrates, at the firſt promulgation of the *Goſpel*.

'TYRANTS indeed (whom GOD's ſoul abhors) were then in poſſeſſion of *rule* and *empire*; but the *remonſtances* and *efforts* of a ſmall deſpiſed ſect, then in its infancy and firſt growth, could give *no check* to their pride and cruelty, nor, in the leaſt, *ſhake* their throne. It might, by a precipitate and over-officious zeal, have entirely *cruſhed* itſelf; but was unable, with any proſpect of *ſucceſs*, to *vindicate* and *reclaim* the liberties of mankind. Upon theſe accounts, it was, for *Chriſtians*, wiſeſt and beſt, and conſequently their duty, to ſubmit. The exhortation of St. *Paul*——for *every ſoul* to *be ſubject* to *the higher powers* *——might, in that *age*, imply very little more, than the advice, which our *Saviour* gave to the young rich man——to *ſell*

* Rom. xiii. 1.

all

all *that he had, and give to the poor*, and to *come and follow* him §. ——This laſt was not, even then, the *univerſal* duty of *Chriſtians*; nor urged, as far as I can find, upon any but the *Jewiſh* converts, whoſe *country*, our Lord foreſaw, would ſhortly be the ſcene of war, of deſolation, and the ruin of all private property; and therefore, wiſely directed, the devoting their *ſubſtance* to the ſupport of truth and righteouſneſs, rather than that it ſhould fall into the hands of the *Romans*, the common *plunderers* of the world, and miniſter to their *riot* and *tyranny*. A *community* of *goods* was, therefore, thought moſt expedient for *Chriſtians*, in their *preſent* condition, and with their *uncomfortable* and *gloomy* proſpects; as was likewiſe, upon the ſame general motives, a *quiet ſubmiſſion* to an unjuſt uſurpation.'

But is it reaſonable, that we, whoſe *liberties* are eſtabliſhed and confirmed, by the *joint conſent* of prince and people, ſhould be laid under the ſame *hard* terms of ſubjection, as the *ſlaves* of a lawleſs and reſiſtleſs *conqueror?* The caſes are ſo utterly *unlike*, that there is no arguing from the one, to the other. Such ſubmiſſion to arbitrary power, as was *juſt* and *neceſſary* in the *firſt age* of *Chriſtianity*, may *now* be a voluntary betraying our *own rights*, and thoſe of our *poſterity*, againſt all the laws of God, and nature.

But there were ſtill other reaſons, in the days of the *Apoſtles*, to yield obedience to the perſons, who then held the reins of *government*, though by *iniquity* and *uſurpation*. 'For a *new ſect* would, naturally, give *umbrage* to a government unſettled, and not founded on principles and maxims of juſtice. Thoſe,

§ Mat. xix. 21.

there-

therefore, who had embraced it ought, in order to their profeſſing, with more ſecurity, a ſcheme of religion, which they apprehended to be truly divine, to be particularly *circumſpect* and *cautious* in all queſtions and controverſies, relating to *civil government*; becauſe by appearing *unſeaſonably*, as ſtrenuous advocates for *liberty*, they might have given a handle to their enemies to repreſent *Chriſtianity itſelf* as a ſcheme of *ſedition*, tending to ſubvert the conſtitutions and laws of nations. Beſides, as the *primitive Chriſtians* were looked upon, by their *heathen* adverſaries, only as a ſect of *Jews*, differing in ſome rites, and circumſtances of *ſuperſtition*, from the reſt of the *Jewiſh* nation; and as *theſe*, in general, bore the *character* of a *heady* and *turbulent* people; and, farther, as it was well known, that they expected, near about this very *time*, a *great prince* to ariſe among *themſelves*, who ſhould eſtabliſh a *new univerſal monarchy*; nothing could be more *wiſe*, than the inculcating ſtrict ſubjection to the *reigning powers:* And that St. *Paul*, in particular, ſhould urge it in his epiſtle to the *Chriſtians* at *Rome*, who were, for the moſt part, *Jews*; and St. *Peter*, likewiſe, upon the *Jewiſh* ſtrangers, diſperſed in other more diſtant colonies of the vaſt *Roman* empire.'

Upon the whole, though the *general* principles, and obligations, of virtue are unalterably, and throughout all human nature, the *ſame*; yet *preſent duties* may *vary*, as *circumſtances* vary. And therefore, even though we ſhould allow, that the Apoſtles, above-mentioned, did preſs *abſolute non-reſiſtance* and *paſſive obedience* (at that time *) to princes inveſted with au-

* I have inſerted this reſtriction; becauſe, that this was not their ſentiment, nor the doctrine of ſcripture, with reſpect to *government in general*, and the *rights of ſubjects*, will, from the whole of this diſcourſe, plainly appear.

thority,

thority; it can, as was before obſerved, by no means follow, that the ſame obligation, to a tame, implicite, ſlaviſh ſubmiſſion, lies *equally* on us, who are in a condition quite *different*, and poſſeſſed of *legal rights*.

AND to demonſtrate this point more clearly, and beyond all reaſonable exception, I ſhall,

FIRST, treat briefly of the *divine inſtitution*, the *original*, and true *end*, of civil government.

SECONDLY, of the extent of authority, in the *ruling powers*, and the juſt meaſures of obedience and ſubmiſſion, in the *ſubjects*.——From whence we ſhall be eaſily led to collect, the general ſubſtance both of the *magiſtrates*, and *ſubjects*, duty.

LET us begin with the *divine inſtitution*, the *original*, and true *end*, of civil government——not of any *particular polity*; but of *civil government* by the deſign of nature, and the firſt intention of GOD, under *all* its various forms.

AND, here, the FIRST enquiry that preſents itſelf is, 'how far civil government is an *ordinance* of GOD?' In anſwer to which, it may, I think, be ſafely aſſerted, 'that *no* government deſerves to be eſteemed, and reverenced, as *his* inſtitution, but what is framed, and conducted, on the *model* of his own univerſal government.' Juſtice, and mercy, wait on his eternal throne, and, by theſe, his dominion, and the exerciſe of his omnipotence, are always *bounded*: And can it be ſuppoſed, that he has veſted in inferior and dependent powers, his *vice-gerents* and *repreſentatives*, a licence to oppreſs, and ſpurn at juſtice?

This would be to make himſelf a *tyrant* by *proxy*, and to ſully all the glories of his moſt excellent nature: It would be allowing, to *ſubordinate* governments, *ſuch rights*, as never were, or can be, claimed, under his own *unlimitted* and *ſovereign* monarchy. Such a complement, therefore, of lawleſs unaccountable dominion, is an act of idolatry paid to *tyrants*, more groſs, and deſtructive in its conſequences, than almoſt any adorations, that were ever offered, by the *Pagan* world, to brutal or inanimate beings.

AGAIN, SECONDLY, 'no human government can be directly and immediately *derived* from GOD, which is *abſolute* and *uncontroulable*; becauſe *theſe*, in the nature of things, are the ſole *incommunicable* characters of his ſupreme empire, which has almighty power, and unerring wiſdom, to regulate all its adminiſtrations, and defend its rights.' Every earthly government *may be* controuled, and limited; and this appears to be, oftentimes, *expedient* and *neceſſary*, for the good of mankind in general.

FARTHER, in order to decide the queſtion now before us, let us ſeriouſly, and diſcarding all prejudice, and intereſted views, aſk ourſelves theſe queſtions——'Did GOD create the *people* for the avarice, grandeur, and luxury of *princes*; or inſtitute *kings*, and *governours*, for the ſafety and welfare of the *people?* Could he intend, that the greateſt part of the world ſhould be *enſlaved*, without remedy, to a *lineal ſucceſſion* of *tyrants*, perhaps the moſt *degenerate*, and *worthleſs*, of their kind? Eſpecially, when it is manifeſt from experience, that *liberty* is the *parent* of knowledge, of philoſophy, of uſeful arts, of the moſt ſublime and liberal virtues; and *ſlavery* the *natural ſource* of implicite

plicite credulity, of baſeneſs of temper, of vice, ignorance, and miſery.'

It is abſolutely unreaſonable to imagine, that God would exalt a few, to be *abſolute lords* over the lives and fortunes of others, 'unleſs they were either of a *different ſpecies*, or, at leaſt, endowed with *higher* and more *eminent faculties*. If this was his everlaſting ſtanding *ordinance*, he would, without doubt, inſpire all ſuch with a *genius*, and *dignity* of *ſentiment*, ſuited to their rank; and not have ſo frequently fixed on thoſe as his *miniſters*, who wanted the underſtanding, experience, and honour, of ſome of the *meaneſt* of their ſubjects.' But nothing can be more unſuitable, to the very idea of his infinite wiſdom, than the creating a monſter of *tyrannical* power, without making any *proviſion* for *preventing*, or *correcting*, its extravagancies.

And to add no more, 'as *empires* and *governments* were *founded*, before we read of any *expreſs law* of God, relating to government; and as the firſt inſtitution, among the *Jews*, was not of a *regal*, but rather, as it ſhould ſeem, of a *democritical*, form (the perſons, inveſted with authority, being choſen from among the *elders* of *Iſrael*) and afterwards, again, the *Hebrew republic* was, by the permiſſion of God, converted into a *limited monarchy*: It from hence undeniably follows, that no *particular ſpecies* of government can be fixed upon, as the *unalterable appointment* of God, contrived and adapted for the *uſe* of *all nations*——Nor can government *in general* be denominated his *ordinance*, in any other view, than as the *natural inſtincts*, the *condition*, and *exigencies*, of mankind prompt, and lead them to it. It is the direction and dictate of *nature*, and, therefore, the voice and will of God. But this does not, in the leaſt, hinder

its being originally founded in the *conſent*, and *mutual agreement*, of magiſtrates and ſubjects: Becauſe, though *marriage* be an expreſs inſtitution and law of the almighty, it is, however, a *voluntary ſtipulation*; and the ſame may be ſaid of the *relations* of maſters and ſervants, in all inſtances of *contracted* and *limited* ſervitude.'

BUT all this will not ſatisfy the unnatural advocates for abſolute power, againſt the common rights of mankind, and their own *birthright*, as the *rational* offſpring of heaven. They would, notwithſtanding, fain erect a throne of violence and oppreſſion, upon the doctrine of the *new teſtament*.

'FOR thus they plead, does not St. *Paul* in effect affirm, that *all power is* of GOD? Muſt it not be abſurd to ſuppoſe, that *all power* means no *particular* power, but only rule and government *in general*, that can have no ſeat but in the *mind?* And is it not a plain preſumption, that this Apoſtle deſigned to be underſtood, not of *imaginary* and *chimerical*, but of *real* and *eſtabliſhed*, governments, when he adds, *the powers that are* [*i. e.* which actually ſubſiſt, and hold the ſeat of command and empire] *are ordained of* GOD *?'

THUS it is, that *revelation* is dragged in, to be an *auxiliary* ſupport and prop of *tyranny*, in all its wanton ſchemes of miſchief; ſo that, whenever the tyrant pleaſes, there muſt be an utter diſſolution of all the *claims* of *nature*, an utter extinction of all *civil liberty*. But that no ſuch inferences can be fairly drawn, from the paſſage above referred to, the following con-

* Rom. xiii. 1.

ſiderations

ſiderations will, I hope, evince, beyond all reaſonable exception.

First, 'that it is an *allowed* general rule, in the interpretation of *all* paſſages of *ſcripture*, that nothing ought ever to be admitted, as the *true ſenſe*, which is repugnant to our *natural notions* of *equity*, and to the *moral character* of God.' Inſtituted religion, in all its parts, is to be explained by natural, the eternal, irrepealable, religion of men: And thus we univerſally reſtrain and limit, with reſpect to every paſſage without diſtinction, in the right acceptation of which, without any mixture of partiality, prejudice, and private intereſt, *common ſenſe* and *reaſon* are *alone* concerned. *Speak evil of no man* *——is never *ſtrictly* and *rigidly* interpreted, becauſe the greater part are inclined to *cenſorioufneſs*; nor, *give to him that aſketh of thee* † ——becauſe the generality are prone to *ſelfiſhneſs*, and *avarice*. Would *abſolute ſubjection* therefore, and a *tame paſſive obedience*, be ever repreſented, as one of the moſt *meritorious* parts of a *Chriſtian*'s duty, if reaſon, or juſtice, or conſiſtency of argument, were in the leaſt regarded; and the *flatterer* did not hope to *riſe*, together with the *tyrant*, upon the depreſſion and miſery of his fellow-creatures? This, moſt ſurely, is very *ſuſpicious* reaſoning, againſt which the free and generous part of mankind ought always to arm themſelves. And to maintain, animate, and enlarge, their zeal for *liberty*, it ſhould always be remembered, that not the mere *words*, but the certain and probable *ſenſe*, of ſcripture is their true, and only, *rule* of judgment.

* Tit. iii. 2. † Mat. v. 42.

To apply this to the paſſage, now chiefly to be conſidered, *viz. the powers, that are, are ordained of* God.——The firſt queſtion, to be aſked, is, 'who was, *then*, the chief reigning *power?* *Nero* was the *emperor* of *Rome*, to whom, the greater part of the known world was *ſubject*. What was his *right* to govern? An *hereditary right*, derived from fraud and violence. ——Are fraud and violence juſt *foundations* of *civil authority?* No: But rather horrid and deteſtable in the ſight of God, and man. Had this *tyrant*, then, any *heroical*, or even *good*, *qualities*, to *ſoften* the inhumanity and rigour of the ſubjects oppreſſion? Not one; but was a perfect monſter of unbridled *luſt*, *rapaciouſneſs*, and *cruelty*.'

Could God therefore, whoſe throne is eternally fixed and ſupported by juſtice, *approve* of one, ſo utterly corrupt and tyrannous? Could he *immediately depute* him to empire? Could he *conſtitute*, as his *vice-gerent*, ſuch a flagrant contradiction to himſelf, his nature, and his laws? Could it be the will of God, that he ſhould not be *oppoſed*, in any of his ſchemes of violence, if it could have been done, with a rational probability of *ſucceſs?* Would it not rather have ſubſerved, the general view of his providence, if he had been *controuled*, nay *dethroned*, and *ſtripped* of all the prerogatives and *pomp* of *ſovereignty?* Theſe things, as they are the certain unqueſtionable dictates of *reaſon*, cannot be contradicted by any paſſages in the *Chriſtian religion*, if it aſpires to a *divine* original.

But, Secondly, 'it ſo happens, that the very *words* of St. *Paul* himſelf, taken in their juſt latitude, and inſeparable connection with the context, are as plainly *repugnant* to *tyranny*, and

and *arbitrary power*, as are the law of man's creation, and the primitive decree and order of nature. For to whom, does he require *ſubjection?*——To *the miniſter* of GOD *for good*; *to rulers*, that *are not a terror to good works*, *but to the evil**: This is his own expreſs deſcription of the *powers*, *ordained of* GOD.'

THE inſtruments, therefore, of plunder and devaſtation, the infringers of nature's rights, the perverters of juſtice, the oppreſſors of the innocent, the underminers of the conſtitution, the determined oppoſers of the ultimate end of all ſovereign power, can have no pretence, but from mere neceſſity, to *allegiance* and *ſubmiſſion*. But St *Paul* on the contrary, even in the above-cited paſſage, which is alledged as the grand bulwark of tyranny, has laid down, and openly avowed (as far, as the circumſtances of the times would *then* allow) the very *principles*, on which the late glorious *revolution* was attempted, and perfected. And tyrants, both upon the principles of nature and religion, can only be the *ordinance* of GOD ſo far——' as they ſupport peace and order upon *the whole*, and may be, ſometimes, peferable to a ſtate of abſolute *anarchy* and *confuſion*; or, as they are *permitted* to *reign*, by the ſupreme authority of heaven, in the natural, and without a *miracle*, unavoidable train of events; or as the *ſcourges* (like *ſtorms*, and *earthquakes*, and other terrible *cataſtrophes* in nature) of corrupted and degenerate nations.'

GOD is frequently repreſented, in the holy ſcriptures, not only as the *ordainer*, but the *author* of many evils; in which, it is moſt certain, he can have no *direct* or *real efficiency*. In the ſtrong figurative ſtrain of eaſtern language, there is no *evil*

* Rom. xiii. 3, 4.

in a city, which *the Lord hath not done* * : He *deceives* †, *blinds* ‡, *hardens* ‖ ; things, in the *acts themſelves*, for ever incompatible with his wiſdom, purity, and mercy. In the ſame way, that *theſe* are deſcribed as his *immediate acts*, tyrannical and oppreſſive government may be repreſented as *his inſtitution*.'

'AND, yet, as blindneſs of mind, and hardneſs of heart, are dreadful calamities, which every man, to the utmoſt of his power, is bound to *prevent* and *oppoſe* ; ſo violence and tyranny are, with the utmoſt efforts of human nature, to be *reſiſted*, and, if poſſible, utterly *baniſhed* out of the world. There can be nothing *ſacred*, or *inviolable*, in iniquity and miſchief.' The mere name, the outward dazling enſigns, of proud imperial tyranny cannot be entitled to a *rational* awe and veneration ; nor can mankind, whom the GOD of nature hath inveſted with liberty, be required to make a ſacrifice of it, to ſuch a mere *idol* of *power* : Becauſe the *ſovereignty*, of GOD himſelf, is not more properly derived, from his uncontroulable omnipotence, and the extent of his actual dominion, than from the *majeſty* of his equity, and goodneſs.

AS to the original, and end, of civil government, after what has been already offered, I need ſay but little. It is plain, as far as appears both from ſcripture, and all ancient hiſtories, that it neither *in general*, nor with reſpect to any *particular form* of it, was derived from an *expreſs inſtitution*, or *poſitive law*, of almighty GOD. It muſt, therefore, either have ſprang from *conqueſt*, and *uſurpation* ; or from a voluntary ſolemn *contract*, between the governours, and the people. But as uſurpation, and conqueſt, though they may erect a power, that is arbitrary and

* Amos iii. 6. † Ezek. xiv. 9. ‡ John xii. 4. ‖ Exod. x. 1. 20. Rom. ix. 18.

uncon-

uncontroulable, can yet confer *no authority*; it neceſſarily follows, that all *equitable government* muſt be *founded* in *mutual conſent*.

BUT what, it will be aſked, could induce mankind, poſſeſſed by nature of *equal liberty*, to *reſign* any of their rights, and *ſubmit voluntarily* to a ſupreme power? The anſwer is obvious, *viz.* their inſtincts to *ſociety*, to *regular*, *peaceable*, *harmonious* ſociety; and the vaſt advantages of a *common form* of *political government*, above the natural ſtate of independence, and private rule. Government is evidently adapted, for the *greater ſecurity* of property; for *defence* againſt injury and violence; for the more *effectual* adminiſtration of juſtice; for cheriſhing *emulation*, the ſpur to induſtry; for *improvements* in knowledge, and the *encouragement* of liberal and uſeful arts, tending to the refinement, and greater convenience, of human life. And, as the reſult of the whole, to dignify and enlarge the ſocial character, and advance more completely the ſocial happineſs, of man. Theſe were ſtrong *motives*, urging mankind to *unite* themſelves together, in particular *civil* ſocieties.'

BUT, upon this foot, the *authority* of the magiſtrate muſt, of neceſſity, be *limited*, and the poſſeſſions, and liberties, of the ſubject *aſcertained*. No one, in his ſenſes, could *freely devote* himſelf to *ſlavery*, or grant to a ſuperior, of his *own raiſing*, an *abſolute* and *unlimited* ſway. He could neither *alienate* the rights of *conſcience*, which *eſſentially* belong to his rational frame; nor the right of *ſelf-preſervation*, which is *antecedent* to all compact, and poſitive law. But the *regulation* of property, the *methods* of ſelf-defence, and of redreſſing, and avenging, perſonal injuries, he muſt *transfer*, in general, to the ſupreme conſtituted power. From whence it muſt appear, upon the whole, that *magiſtrates*

are not to be conſidered as an *order* of men, *diſtinct* from, but only as *parts* of, the civil community; that they can have no *natural intereſt* of their own, but what is involved and blended with the *general good*; and that the *ultimate end*, of all government, can be nothing elſe, than the *proſperity* and *welfare* of the *people*.

But there is another enquiry, ſtill behind, the greateſt and moſt momentous of all, and reaching, in its conſequences, far beyond the utmoſt *period* of all civil ſocieties, and the *diſſolution* of the world itſelf, *viz.*—'What is the juſt *extent*, and what are the *boundaries*, of the magiſtrates power, with reſpect to *religion*, and the rights of *conſcience?*' And here, I believe, it will appear, that he neither has, nor can have, from God, from *nature*, from the *people*, or from the peculiar *reaſon* and *deſign* of his office, *any authority* at all.

In all affairs of *juſtice*, and as to many other branches of *moral conduct*, he has, indeed, an undoubted right to interpoſe; nay, to enforce *theſe*, which are likewiſe eternal laws of heaven, and indiſpenſable parts of true religion, by the *ſanctions* of *civil laws*. But why? 'Not at all, as they are *religious*, but, merely, as they are neceſſary *ſocial*, virtues; or rather, and to ſpeak more properly, not even as they are *virtues*, religious or ſocial, but as *outward acts*, or *courſes* of *public behaviour*, requiſite to the order, and regular ſupport, of government. The *exterior*, the *overt-act*, of fidelity and equity will fully anſwer all *civil* purpoſes, whether it proceeds from *virtue* in the *heart*, or only from *fear*, and worldly *intereſt*.' And *civil authority*, like all other authority, being, of neceſſity, *bounded* by the ultimate view and end of it; to *ſtretch* it farther, muſt be tyrannical violence

violence and uſurpation. 'It may, indeed, *injoin* ſome things, which *religion* injoins; but from motives entirely *different:* It may comprehend, within the true ſcope of it, what *ought*, alſo, to be matters of *conſcience*; and yet have *no right* to interfere, in the leaſt degree, *ſo far* as they are *really* points of conſcience:' And, that this is the juſt ſtate of the caſe, the following conſiderations will, I hope, clearly demonſtrate.

First, 'that in matters *merely religious*, God is, and muſt be, the ſole *legiſlator*.' No creature can, without great pride and preſumption, pretend to fix what are the *general terms* of *acceptance* with him; or ſo much as to determine any thing, about *public forms* of belief, or worſhip, without leaving *conſcience* abſolutely free and uncontrouled. Religion is a *law* to the *heart*; chiefly indeed urged, and enforced, on the internal powers of human nature. But can the *magiſtrate* take *cognizance* of *inward* principles, or intentions? Can he *reward* inward virtue, or *puniſh* the inward temper and habit of vice; of both which, it is impoſſible, that he ſhould be *rightly informed?* 'The power that can neither give *ſure infallible* laws, nor ſecure the *efficacy* and *operation* of its laws, nor in one caſe, out of ten thouſand, *diſtinguiſh* between the *guilty* and the *innocent*, can have no pretence to the character of a power, *inſtituted* and *ordained* by God.'

And this utterly diſſipates and deſtroys all the *claims* of *civil government*, to interfere in the concerns of religion and conſcience, either in *eſſentials*, or *circumſtantials*; in the *impoſition* of things *neceſſary*, or *indifferent*. 'For as ſoon as *ſcruples* and *doubts* ariſe, about things *deemed* to be, or which *are really*, in their own nature indifferent; they immediately become matters of *conſcience*.'

And therefore, even in ſuch caſes, the magiſtrate's *authority* muſt be *nothing*, unleſs it be *unlimited* and *abſolute* in all inſtances: To aſſert which, would be to aboliſh *reaſon*, *conſcience*, and *integrity* altogether; and to exclude the *government* of GOD himſelf.

FOR it is a moſt certain truth, 'that if the *magiſtrate* has a *right* to make laws and ordinances reſpecting religion, GOD can have *no* right: Becauſe, between a power omniſcient, and a power limited, weak, and fallible, there can, in innumerable great and important caſes, be no *concurrence* or *harmony* of rule.' So that if GOD be rejected, from being the *ſole* monarch of the whole *religious* world, the conſequence muſt be no *government*, no *religion*, at all; but the giving up mankind to the looſe and arbitrary ſway, of error, capriciouſneſs, and violence.

AGAIN, as the magiſtrate, in the religious world (which is moſt ſtrictly and unalterably GOD's *kingdom*) has no claim to be a *lawgiver*; as he is entirely unqualified for the *enacting* proper laws, for an impartial *adminiſtration* of juſtice, and effectual *ſupport* of government——this equally evinces, that he has neither from nature, nor the poſitive will of the ſupreme being, nor from the conſent of the people (the moſt ſolemn ſacred ſources of all government) a right to ſet himſelf up 'for an *interpreter* of *divine laws*; or to frame creeds, or articles, to be univerſally ſubſcribed and aſſented to, as a ſtandard of *faith*, or as articles of *peace*, or to *qualify* for higher *emoluments* and *honours* in ſociety.'

FOR the law of nature declares, that, with reſpect to acts of *real virtue*, offices relating to GOD, and tranſactions for *eternity*, the

the rank of the loweſt and meaneſt ſubject is upon an exact *level*, with the pride and oſtentation of the greateſt princes; that kings are to be judged, not as men have *raiſed*, but as GOD *created*, them; not by the *accidental privileges* of their high ſtation, but by the *general laws* of human nature, *adapted* to their peculiar circumſtances.

BUT, farther, as the eternal law of nature ſtrongly remonſtrates, againſt *civil authority* in matters of *conſcience*; both in enacting *new*, and in explaining the *old*, laws of religion; ſo likewiſe does *revelation*. For it deſcribes GOD as the *only potentate* *, as alone *ſearching the hearts*, and *trying the reins of the children of men* †, and capable of *rendering*, to every one, *according to his deeds* ‖; as the original ſource of power, from whom all government is *derived*, and to whom it is *accountable*. And *Chriſt* himſelf, the laſt great reſtorer, and founder, of true religion, that was to continue unrepealed, and unalterable, to the end of time, has expreſsly declared, that his *kingdom is not of this world* §: And, conſequently, that the doctrines of religion ought not to be eſtabliſhed, nor the rules of it enforced, by worldly terrors, and rewards. Beſides, if the magiſtrate be inveſted with this abſolute right of *interpretation*, he muſt have an *equal*, if not a *ſuperior*, power, to the *maker* of the law: I ſay, a *ſuperior* power, becauſe the law itſelf is nothing, but according to his ſenſe and explanation of it; which (unleſs his ſkill in moral politics, is equal to that of GOD, the original legiſlator) will be often, if not generally, a perverſion of the law. And this muſt ſubject, not only the doctrines of revealed religion, but the eternal principles of reaſon and nature, to be altered, corrected, or depraved, by ignorance, craft, and ambition.

* 1 Tim. vi. 15. † Jer. xvii. 10. ‖ Rom. ii. 6. § John xviii. 36.

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BESIDES, 'who are more *unqualified*, than the ſupreme magiſtrates have been, in almoſt all countries, and ages, of the world, to give *judgment* in *religious controverſies?*' Controverſies, which, in the general, they never *ſtudied*; of which they are almoſt entirely *ignorant*; about which, as points of *real religion*, they have very little *concern*, being, for the moſt part, trained up to voluptuouſneſs, and want of thought: And which, they are under ſtrong temptations to *pervert* (if they did, by a kind of miraculous and ſupernatural *inſpiration*, underſtand them *rightly*) to vile *ſecular* purpoſes?

SUFFER me to purſue the argument a little farther, and to add, 'that if *magiſtrates* have a *right* to *command*, in affairs relating to religion, *ſubjects* muſt be *obliged* to *obey*, to obey *abſolutely*, whether *with*, or *againſt*, conſcience; to obey *all* magiſtrates, ſince their right is ſuppoſed to reſult from their *office*; and, conſequently to be *Proteſtants*, and *Papiſts*, *idolaters*, or worſhipers of the one true GOD, *Mahometans*, *Pagans*, *Chriſtians* ——all kind of *contrarieties*, as they are differently diſperſed, and ſituated. For if they are, any where, allowed to *diſſent*, and remonſtrate againſt the *impoſitions* of the *civil power*, it can only be upon this foundation, that the injunctions, laid on them, are contrary to their *reaſon*, and the dictates of their *private conſcience*: And, if this be *ever* admitted to be a *rightful* plea, it muſt be admitted in *all* caſes; and '*conſcience*, not the *will* of the *magiſtrate*, muſt be the univerſal *guide*.'

IT is proper to be remarked farther, that there is a manifeſt and important difference, between *civil*, and *religious*, diſputes; 'becauſe, in the former inſtance, it may be impoſſible for *one* man,

man, to be abſolutely *poſſeſſed* of a particular branch of property, without *anothers*, being *deprived* of it. But *every man* may enjoy his *religious opinions*, and practice his *peculiar modes* of worſhip, without the leaſt injury to any other *ſingle member* of the ſociety, or detriment to the whole.'

ADD to all this, that by eſpouſing the ſentiment, which I am now oppoſing, 'of the *neceſſity*, and *authority*, of a public *magiſtratical* religion,' *Chriſtianity* itſelf is virtually condemned; becauſe all thoſe, who at firſt either *publiſhed*, or *embraced*, it, renounced, and directly confronted, the religion of *the ſtate*. Upon the ſame foot, all *reformations* of the moſt wicked and hurtful *errors* muſt, by this new-invented ſcheme of tyranny, be *precluded*, and *diſcouraged*. It *cramps* free and ingenuous inquiry, *obſtructs* all improvements in moral and divine knowledge, tends to *eſtabliſh*, and *perpetuate* error, throughout all ages and generations of men, and to *exchange* true religion for *artifice*, and the *uniformity* of an outward, ſlaviſh, hypocritical, profeſſion. As the reſult of all, it muſt weaken every moral tie, undermine juſtice, honeſty, mutual truth and fidelity, and ſupplant the foundations of *civil ſociety* itſelf. 'And this, I think, is not only applicable to extremes of violence, but to *worldly rewards*, and *diſcouragements* of all kinds; which are a degree of *force*, upon the *underſtanding*, and of *tyranny* over the freedom, and immunities, of *conſcience*.'

ONCE more, 'if it be *every mans* indiſpenſable *duty*, and, of courſe, a *right* which he may juſtly claim, to act agreeably to the inward *light*, and *convictions*, of his own mind, the *civil power* can have no *authority*, to impoſe the *minuteſt* article with reſpect to *religion*; becauſe theſe *two rights* are, in their natures, utterly

utterly *repugnant* and *incompatible*.' The allowing the *magiſtrate's* right is directly calculated, and the experience of the world ſhews, that it has no other uſual effect, than to produce *ignorance*, *ſlavery*, and *miſery*. Whereas a *variety* of opinions and ſects can, of *itſelf*, create *no diſorders*. Theſe ſpring, altogether, from the corrupt *paſſions* of men. And a *public leading* in religion has generally been, in *fact*, the bane of *knowledge*, and *rational piety*; and continues at this day, in almoſt all nations, to be nothing better, than the eſtabliſhment of *falſhood* and *iniquity*, *by a law* *.

It is, therefore, incumbent, on all *wiſe* and *Chriſtian* magiſtrates, whether ſupreme, or ſubordinate, to imitate the example of *Gallio*; who was *zealous* to decide *equitably*, in all controverſies about *natural* and *civil* rights; but when he was appealed to as *a judge*, in queſtions and debates merely *religious*, declined thruſting himſelf into the throne of God, and would meddle with *none of theſe things* §. This is recorded of him, by St. *Paul*, to the honour of his *juſt* and *generous* temper: The office of a magiſtrate, ſo far as it at all concerns *religion*, being wholly confined to this, *viz.*——'to be ſtrict and circumſpect in the regulation of his own conduct, both as a *man*, and a *governour*; to ſupport and encourage the *ſocial virtues*, and puniſh *impartially*, and without *reſpect* of *perſons*, the contrary miſchievous and deſtructive *vices*, to *protect every ſubject* in the *full enjoyment* of his religious liberty, and *reſtrain* the *exceſſes*, and *injuries* of violent zeal, in *all parties*; in a word, to allow to *all*, of equal *public merit*, and who equally *contribute*, their juſt proportion, to the *ſupport* of government, the *capacity*, at leaſt, of enjoying equal

* Pſal. xciv. 20. § Acts xviii. 17.

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privileges, and not to debar any from offices of *truſt*, or *honourable ſervice* to their country, merely for *diſſenting* from the *ſtate*-religion.——To be, as it were, the *guardian-angel* of the people, over whom he preſides; the aſſerter of their juſt rights, the patron and protector of their liberties, againſt all *incroachments*; a *terror* only to *evil* doers, but for *the praiſe of them that do well* *; and *the miniſter of* GOD, for moſt public and diffuſive *good* §.'

LET me only add, for the concluſion of this chapter, 'that to all ſupreme *powers*, which, in *the main*, purſue the *ultimate end* of government, and conſult the *common happineſs* of the ſubjects, *reverence* and *obedience* are indiſpenſably due, by all *divine*, as well as human, laws.' It is an act of virtue, and *religion*, notwithſtanding many *overſights* and *errors*, to which all *human policies* are *liable*, to *fear the* LORD, *and the king* (where a *limited monarchy* is the eſtabliſhed form) and *meddle not with them, who are given to change* †; to *lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty* ‖; to pay *tribute, to whom tribute is* due ‡, and *render unto* Cæſar, *the things that are* Cæſar's, *and unto* GOD, *the things which are* GOD's **; and to *ſupport* and *defend* the government, to the utmoſt of our ability, both againſt *inteſtine treaſons*, and the *invaſion*, and *uſurpation*, of a *foreign* power.

* Rom. xiii. 3. 1 Pet. ii. 14. § Rom. xiii. 4. † Prov. xxiv. 21.
‖ 1 Tim. ii. 2. ‡ Rom xiii. 7. ** Mat. xxii. 21.

CHAP. IX.

Of the office, and qualifications, of the miniſters of the Goſpel; *and the proper conduct of the* people, *towards their* miniſters.

I PROCEED, in this chapter, to diſcourſe on the mutual duties of *Chriſtian miniſters*, and *people*, which ſpring not, indeed, from one of thoſe original and natural relations, which the creator of mankind eſtabliſhed from the beginning; but, notwithſtanding, from a *relation*, that at preſent *actually ſubſiſts*: The *obligations*, of which, are of the higheſt importance; and the groſſer *neglects*, of them, of as fatal conſequence to piety, and ſocial virtue, as thoſe of *any other* relation whatſoever.

THE *Chriſtian* miniſtry is, *in itſelf*, adapted, to promote the greateſt and moſt ſublime purpoſe, that *rational* beings can have in their view; *viz.* to advance the inherent dignity and perfection of their nature, and to ſecure to it the higheſt happineſs, of which it is capable: And yet it has, eſpecially in theſe modern times, been treated with the utmoſt *ſcorn*, and is become, with many, a favourite topic of *reproach* and *ridicule*. This may be owing, in ſome, to the *corruption* of their own *moral principles*; to a mind immerſed in ſenſuality, and darkened by habits of vice. They may be, perhaps, enemies to the miniſterial character,

character, however honourably ſupported, becauſe they are enemies to all rules of inward order and rectitude, to all reſtraints upon intemperate paſſion. And it would be ſtrange indeed, if the *diſhoneſt* ſhould not have a natural averſion to the preachers of ſtrict *virtue* and *integrity*; and the *gay* and *voluptuous*, to ſuch whoſe office it is, to proteſt againſt, and expoſe, the ſhamefulneſs of a life ſpent in *vanity* and *luxury*, and denounce the judgments of GOD againſt thoſe *exceſſes* of animal pleaſure, which are not only inconſiſtent with the *Chriſtian* profeſſion, but diſhonourable to the name and character of a *man*.

HOWEVER, there is ſuch an *amiableneſs* in true *Chriſtianity*; ſuch an evident *fitneſs* in humble expreſſions of reverence, and gratitude, to the father and ſupreme governour of the univerſe; ſuch native *worth* in probity and juſtice; ſuch a diſtinguiſhed *grace* and *beauty* in unconfined benevolence, in gentleneſs, condeſcenſion, and mercy; and the creator himſelf has graciouſly provided, ſo powerful an *advocate* for theſe neceſſary virtues, in what is commonly called *natural conſcience*, one of the chief principles in our inward *moral frame*; that the abovementioned, even when they are joined by the *giddy* and *unthinking*, whom the charms of a licentious wit, or a faſhionable levity, may have ſeduced: All theſe, I ſay, together, would not have made ſo *formidable* a party, againſt the credit and influence of the *miniſters* of *Chriſt*, if too many, who have aſſumed that character, had not furniſhed *weapons* againſt their own cauſe, and increaſed the *ſtrength* of the enemy, by their imprudent and irregular conduct. 'Their inſatiate thirſt after *riches*, their fierce contentions for *preheminence* and *greatneſs*, their unlimited *pride*, and deſire of *dominion* over the faith of their fellow-Chriſtians, their *indolence* and *ſelf-gratification*, their expreſſing a much warmer

and more intenſe zeal, for their own peculiar *emoluments* and *powers*, for the *external conſtitution* of churches, and for human *rites* and *ceremonies*, than for the plain eſſential *truths* and *precepts* of the *Goſpel*; and, in a word, their *animoſities* among themſelves, their *oppreſſions* of ſcrupulous conſciences, their *ſupplanting*, and rigidly *cenſuring*, one another for *involuntary* errors, about points of very remote and inconſiderable uſe, and their confining *Chriſtianity*, and the *communion* of *ſaints*, to thoſe of their own ſentiments and ſpirit, and endeavouring to raiſe, eſtabliſh, or extend, their *popularity*, by infuſing unjuſt prejudices, againſt the characters and labours of others: Theſe are *ſome* of the cauſes, the libertine converſations, and writings, of the preſent age demonſtrate, that they are among the *chief* cauſes, of the growth of *infidelity* and *irreligion*.'

It is by means of this palpable, and unnatural, inconſiſtency of our practices, with thoſe refined *morals*, thoſe maxims of *generoſity* and univerſal *liberty*, which the *Goſpel* inculcates, that the miniſtry is ſunk to ſuch a ſtate of irreverence and diſhonour, and *Chriſt*, and his religion, are blaſphemed. It is, indeed, a certain ſign of a *ſuperficial* judgment, and *narrowneſs* of thought and obſervation, to argue againſt the *intrinſic* excellency, and *beneficial* tendency, of a doctrine, or inſtitution, from mere *accidental* abuſes, to which, almoſt all things in the courſe of nature, and the principles of every ſcience, are, in ſome meaſure, ſubject. We might indeed, with as much propriety, urge the imprudences, and immoralities, of particular *teachers* of *philoſophy*, againſt the *profeſſion* of philoſophy itſelf, as draw the like prepoſterous concluſion, from the diſorderly conduct of pretended *miniſters* of *Chriſt*. But, notwithſtanding, it is greatly to be feared, that ſome perſons of ſober diſpoſitions, and, in the main,

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of upright intentions, have been ſo far *prejudiced*, as, upon this ſhallow foundation only, to look upon the miniſterial order itſelf, as at leaſt *uſeleſs*, and of *arbitrary* deſignation, if not as *detrimental* to the cauſe of virtue, and the intereſts of human ſocieties.

WHAT now is to be done? The *exceſſes*, which the adverſaries of *Chriſtianity* ſo much inſiſt upon, which they aggravate, and exert all their ſkill, and eloquence, to paint in the moſt diſagreeable colours, have doubtleſs, in too many inſtances, been groſsly *ſcandalous:* But are they, therefore, to be *concealed*, or *palliated?* This, I think, is by no means adviſeable: But it muſt become us much better, to take all opportunities to *diſclaim* ſuch notorious offenders, who are loſt to all ſenſe of *decency*. For, by this means, we ſhall prevent the *infamy* from being general, and take the moſt effectual courſe, to repair ſome part, at leaſt, of the *damage*, which our holy religion has ſuſtained. 'Eſpecially, if it be added, that the perſons, from whom the *offence* and *ſcandal* have ariſen, are ſuch, as *Chriſt* will at laſt ſolemnly *diſown*, as having no *commiſſion* under him, nor the leaſt diſtant *relation* to his ſervice; and that the irregularities, complained of, could never have been committed, if the *miniſterial character* had been *rightly* underſtood, and ſupported in *that manner*, in which the *New Teſtament* has deſcribed it.'

AND as ſeveral paſſages, relating to this point, have a more confined ſenſe, which can only be juſtly applied to the *Apoſtles*, and other *extraordinary* miniſters of *Chriſt*, at the firſt propagation of the *Goſpel*; and all the branches of duty, which belong to *Chriſtian* miniſters in general, may be reduced under one part, or other, of the following exhortation of St. *Peter:* I ſhall fix on that as my ſtandard, and in treating, farther, on this ſubject, follow

follow the order, which is therein prescribed. The exhortation itself is this, *the elders, which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder*——*Feed the flock of* GOD, *which is among you, taking the oversight* thereof, *not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over* GOD'S *heritage, but being ensamples to the flock* *.

IN these words, there is one general remark of great importance, highly proper to be made, before I proceed to the illustration of particulars: And it is this, *viz.*——That this *prince* of the *Apostles* (as the *Papists*, to give some softening to the insolence and tyranny of the *bishops* of *Rome*, absurdly stile him) assumes no other title than this, writing to the *elders* of the church, *who am also an elder*; or, as the words may be properly rendered, who am your *fellow-elder* †. He claimed no *priority*, no *jurisdiction*, no *peculiar* honours: But, as if he had written under an immediate direction, and influence, of the spirit of *prophecy*, and to prevent his name being abused, as a *sanction* of exorbitant and lordly claims, he represents the character of an *elder* (which is the same, in plain *english*, with *presster*, or *priest*) 'as a character not of *splendor*, but usefulness; not of *ambition* and *luxury*, but of humility and moderation; not of *sordidness*, but of generosity, and contempt of wordly gain; not of *indolence*, but of activity and labour, for the good of the *Christian* church.' Nor is this the least diminution of the *honour* of the office, which he describes; because outward *names*, and *titles* of *reverence*, may be annexed to the most worthless and infamous characters: And that, to impartial reason, has always the true *inherent dignity*, which is raised upon, and

* 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 3. † Συμπρεσβύτερος.

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ſupported by, the ſtrict principles of virtue, and of moſt extenſive and durable advantage to mankind. And upon theſe general and inconteſtable maxims of *reaſon*, and *Chriſtianity*, the miniſterial office, when it anſwers the great deſign of its inſtitution, cannot be thought unworthy of ſome degree of affection, and honourable regard: 'Becauſe, upon this ſuppoſition of its *ſucceſs*, it does a ſervice, than which no *higher*, with reſpect to time, and to eternity, can be rendered, to the *reaſonable creatures*, *ſubjects*, *family*, or, in the Apoſtles own language, to *the flock* of GOD.' I now proceed to give a more minute, but brief, deſcription of the nature, and deſign, of the miniſterial office, with reſpect to all the ſeveral branches, into which, St. *Peter* has divided it.

AND the FIRST branch of it, which I am led to mention, is this, to *feed the flock of* GOD. Some of the terms, here uſed, are plainly figurative, but the general ſenſe is——'inſtruct thoſe, under your care, in the great and momentous *principles* of the *Chriſtian religion*; declare to them the *whole counſel* of GOD, relating to their eternal ſalvation; recommend the *duties*, which the *Goſpel* requires, and urge the *practice* of them, by all its moſt generous, encouraging, and awful *motives*; endeavour to convince their *judgments*, as the only juſt foundation of engaging their *affections*: And, by theſe methods, cultivate divine knowledge, improve their inward rectitude, and thoſe habits of piety and univerſal goodneſs, which are the *life*, and *ſtrength*, and chief *ornament* of the human ſoul.'

BUT, beſides this general acceptation, there are ſome more particular directions, that are neceſſary to be diſtinctly ſpecified. As,

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In the First place, 'it is highly neceſſary, that miniſters, as *paſtors* of the *flock* of God, ſhould acquaint them with the *grounds* and *reaſons*, and general *evidences*, of religion, both *natural*, and *revealed*.' They ſhould begin with explaining, and proving, the fundamental *principles* of natural religion, upon which, not only the *certainty*, but the very *poſſibility*, of a divine revelation neceſſarily depends. Theſe important articles are, the being of a God, his univerſal providence, his moral government, and a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. And when the *foundation* is thus rightly laid, the next natural ſtep is, to proceed to the *ſuperſtructure*. Whereas, if they are unconcerned and careleſs, about eſtabliſhing the *firſt principles of Chriſtianity*, and all religious knowledge, ſome, or other, of their hearers, in this age of uncontrouled and wanton ſcepticiſm, may be in danger of falling, all at once, from a *profeſſion* of the *Goſpel*, into downright *Atheiſm* itſelf.

To which I may add, that *rational* belief in God, and *juſt* apprehenſions concerning him, muſt, as the *Goſpel* is a *divine* inſtitution, have a direct tendency to ſtrengthen our regard to its *authority*, and inſpire a higher veneration of its *laws*, and *doctrines*. And if the people are, likewiſe, carefully inſtructed, in the *proper evidence* of *revealed* religion, that they may not be *implicite*, but *reaſonable*, believers, upon ſolid grounds, and a deliberate conviction of the underſtanding, their *faith* muſt, in the nature of things, be a more ſteddy and lively principle of univerſal piety, and virtue.

Again, 'another rule, neceſſary to be obſerved by the miniſters of *Chriſt*, is—when they are explaining the *peculiar* doctrines,

trines, and duties, of *Chriſtianity*, to endeavour to convince their hearers, that they form a *wiſe* and *conſiſtent* ſcheme, and have all a *practical* and *purifying* tendency.' They ſhould ſtrongly inculcate the ſubordination of the *means* of religion to the end, of *ſpeculations*, and *rituals*, to immutable moral duties. For to ſet faith, and reaſon, at *variance* is, and muſt ever be, the root of infinite *ſuperſtition*. And if *Chriſtian principles*, and *privileges*, and the poſitive inſtitutions of *baptiſm*, and the *lord's-ſupper*, are any other ways inſiſted on, than as encouragements and incitements to *virtue*, this is ſo far from preaching *Chriſt*, or advancing the ultimate end of his divine miſſion, that it is really the ſubverſion of it; and making a very bad uſe of *revealed* religion, to undermine and overturn *all* religion.

THOSE miniſters, therefore, do, in my opinion, diſcharge their office with the greateſt *fidelity*, and *care*, whoſe *principal aim* it is, to enforce the ſolid and indiſpenſable virtues of a holy life; whoſe *chain*, and moſt *frequent ſcope*, of inſtruction relates ——to the ſupreme veneration and love of GOD, to equity, truth, univerſal benevolence and peaceableneſs, to temperance and chaſtity, and all other inſtances of ſelf-government; who inculcate the principles of *Chriſtian liberty*, and acknowledge all, as their *brethren* (however *erroneous*) who lead *godly*, *righteous*, and *ſober* lives †; who recommend a diligent *ſtudy* of the holy ſcriptures, and freedom of ingenuous *enquiry*——Theſe miniſters, I ſay, appear, to me, to diſcharge their office with the ſtricteſt fidelity, and care; becauſe they act conformably to the following plain rules, laid down by the *firſt* preachers of the *Goſpel*, *viz.*——*Search the ſcriptures* *: judge ye of yourſelves

† Tit. ii. 12. * John v. 39.

what is right: *Though I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing* †: This is *a faithful ſaying, and theſe things, I will, that thou affirm conſtantly, that they, who have believed in* GOD, *might be careful to maintain good works: Theſe things are good and profitable unto men* ‡.

SHOULD it be aſked, more particularly, in what light, the *general ſcheme* of the *Chriſtian* doctrine may be *moſt properly* repreſented? If I might not be thought guilty of preſumption, in undertaking to direct in an affair ſo much controverted, I would propoſe this ſummary account of it.——'That the general *ſubſtance*, of this divine inſtitution, is natural religion and virtue *revived*, when the knowledge of them was, in a manner, eraſed from the minds of men, by vice and wild enthuſiaſm; with the *addition* of two or three plain poſitive inſtitutions, guarded in the ſtrongeſt manner againſt ſuperſtitious *abuſes*, and adapted to *enforce* the eternal laws of virtue and goodneſs.'

BUT, more minutely, the principles, recommended by it, are theſe. 'That there is *one* GOD, *the father* §, and the *ſupreme* lord of all, *who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt* ‖: That mankind are *accepted*, with this infinite being, through the *righteouſneſs of faith* *, co-inciding, in the final ſcope of it, with the general law of *ſincerity*; which, at the ſame time, that it condemns every inſtance of *wilful vice*, is condeſcending to the *involuntary infirmities* of human nature: That the favour of GOD is extended to *all* mankind, his forgiving mercy to *all* true penitents; but diſpenſed in ſuch *a way* [*i. e.* through the *mediation*

† 1 Cor. xiii. 2. ‡ Tit. iii. 8. § 1 Cor. viii. 6.
‖ Eph. vi. 9. * Rom. x. 6.

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of *Christ*] that *reason* could neither *discover*, nor can justly *arraign*——an expedient wisely pitched upon, to encourage *repentance* by the hope of *mercy*; to inspire sinful men, undeserving of the divine favour, with constant sentiments of *humility*; and to extirpate *superstition*: That the father of mankind is ever ready to *assist* them, in the pursuit of purity, and happiness: That he will hereafter *judge the world in righteousness* * (whom he has made necessarily subject to his government, and accountable for their behaviour) by *Jesus Christ*: That when he allots, to all *impenitent* offenders, impartial *retribution*, in proportion to the various degrees of their *guilt*, he will munificently *reward* his *faithful* and *obedient* servants (from the immutable *pleasure* he takes in *virtue*, and to render it finally *victorious*, and *triumphant* over iniquity and vice) with immortal felicity and honour: And, that when the fates of all mankind are *judicially* decided, and, consequently, the *ends* of *Christ's* mediation entirely accomplished, *the kingdom* shall be *delivered up* to GOD, *even the father*——that *the son also himself may be subject unto him, who put all things under him*, and GOD *may be all in all* †.

A SCHEME this, upon the whole, that, one would think, every *considerate*, every *religious*, every truly *moral*, man must highly esteem, and venerate: And all, who heartily *believe* it, and allow it to have its natural and just *influence*, will, *probably*, be happy in peace, and sublime joy of mind, here; and, *infallibly*, in the everlasting favour of GOD hereafter.

THE next branch of the ministers duty, which I am led to consider, is——*to take the oversight of the flock of* GOD. The

* Acts xvii. 31. † 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

general import, of which, is comprehended in the following particulars.

FIRST, 'that he *examine* into the *condition* and *ſtate* of it, and ſee (as far as his power and influence, which are *perſuaſive* only, and not *dictatorial*, juſtly extend) that all things, relating to the public offices of religion, be managed with *ſerioufneſs*, and *decency*; and according to the *model*, and *order*, preſcribed in the New Teſtament.' He ought, alſo, 'to *watch*, leaſt dangerous *errors*, ſubverſive of the grand deſign of *Chriſtianity*, inconſiſtent with its eſſential principles, and of an *impure* and *immoral* tendency, are introduced into the church.'. And though differences in opinion, about leſſer points, deſerve but *little regard*; yet when notions, which are directly calculated for the promotion of licentiouſneſs and vice, appear, theſe are to be ſtrenuouſly *oppoſed*. But how? Only by the *force* of argument, and by *mild* and *calm* perſuaſion: For *the ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle unto all men* *.

AGAIN, it is his duty, as an *overſeer*, 'to inſtruct the *ignorant*, as their various circumſtances may require; to adminiſter comfort to the *dejected*; to raiſe and ſupport the *feeble-minded*; to endeavour to confirm the *irreſolute*; to remove groundleſs *ſuſpicions* and *doubts*; to check the exorbitant *ſallies* of *youth*, and give it an *early turn* to virtue and piety; and, particularly, by repreſenting them in the moſt agreeable and amiable light, and not in a diſconſolate and frightful dreſs, to make them the objects of their *averſion*: And, finally, to admoniſh and reprove thoſe that *walk diſorderly*, and, by their vices, ſully the honour of the *Chriſtian* character.'

* 2 Tim. ii. 24.

BUT,

BUT, in order to diſcharge this *laſt* part of their duty, with the deſired *ſucceſs*, proper circumſtances of *time*, and *place*, and the particular *characters*, and *tempers*, of the perſons, to whom *reproofs* are given, muſt be cautiouſly conſidered, and attended to. They muſt be adminiſtred with all the marks of *tenderneſs*, and *friendſhip*; and every thing *haughty*, *ſupercilious*, and *paſſionate* muſt be avoided. And there may be ſome offenders, ſo entirely loſt to ingenuity, and to all ſenſe of the difference of good and evil, that, to *reprove* them, may only be the way, to make ourſelves the objects of their *ſcorn* and *hatred*. Our Saviour, therefore, has *excuſed*, both the *miniſter*, and private *chriſtian*, from interpoſing here, when he ſays: *Give not that, which* is *holy, unto the dogs, neither caſt ye your pearls before ſwine, leſt they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you* *.

THUS have I given a ſhort account of the *nature*, and *deſign*, of the *miniſterial office*, and ſhewn, in a ſummary way, what is included, in *feeding the flock of* GOD, and *taking the overſight thereof*. We are next to enquire, with what *diſpoſitions*, and in what *manner*, this important truſt muſt be diſcharged.

AND, here, St. *Peter*, in the paſſage above-cited, exhorts in the FIRST place, that it be *not by conſtraint, but willingly*; '*i. e.* not as a *taſk*, or *burden*, impoſed upon us, nor merely for the *fear* of *puniſhment*, if we are negligent or unfaithful in it; but from a mind *inclined* to the ſervice, and which has *devoted* itſelf *voluntarily*, and *freely*, to it.'

* Mat. vii. 6.

SECONDLY,

SECONDLY, *not for filthy lucre*, 'not from a desire of gain, as the *chief* and *predominant* motive, not from a principle of *avarice*; which is so base and sordid a passion, that it renders a man *unfit* for any considerable and useful *trust*, and incapable of being *honest* and *impartial* in the execution of it; and *indisposes* him, in an especial manner, for a *religious* and *moral* employment, because it is absolutely inconsistent with the love of GOD, and the bane of all virtue——*Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*; *i. e.* a *disinterested* and *generous* temper, that *delights* in doing good, and finds, in itself, a *propensity* and *intense desire*, to promote the honour of GOD, and the salvation of immortal souls.'

NEITHER *as being lords over* GOD'S *heritage*, *i. e.* 'not claiming that *jurisdiction* over conscience, that *dominion* over the faith of *Christians*, which the *Apostles* themselves renounced; nor aspiring after *grandeur* and pompous *preheminence*: *But* being *ensamples*, to the flock, 'of *humility*, and *moderation*, thinking themselves happy, in being admitted to *serve* their *Christian* brethren, in so useful a station; and imitating their great Lord and master, who *came not to be ministred unto, but to minister* *.——Being *examples*, likewise, of a fervent, but discreet and temperate, *piety*; of *love* to *all* mankind; of affability and condescension; of *gravity*, without moroseness; of *mortification*, without superstitious austerities; of *zeal*, without censoriousness, or violent transport; of *openness* and *simplicity* of mind, without prejudice or craft; of *diligence*, *prudence*, *temperate* and *well-ordered* passions; of a strong *thirst* after *knowledge* in themselves, and readiness to *communicate* it, freely, to others; of *contentment*, *chearfulness*, and

* Mat. xxii. 28.

a calm

a calm *submission* to the determinations of providence: And of a *steady*, and though not rash and incautious, yet *inflexible*, *integrity*; which, though it *shuns* danger, when it may be avoided with *honour*, and a *good conscience*, and is so far indulgent to the peoples *prejudices*, as to take the most *easy* and *inoffensive* methods, of instilling, into their minds, right principles of religion, yet never uses any *arts*, to deceive them into *wrong meanings*; never, by studied *ambiguities* of speech, flatters and confirms them in their *errors*, nor, in the least, sooths their *vices*; and, when called to so *severe* a trial, sacrifices every worldly interest, to maintain the cause of *Christianity* and virtue, which is the cause of GOD.'

I SHALL only add, that *Christian* ministers have the highest possible encouragement, to be thus *incorrupt*, *zealous*, and *faithful* in their ministrations, and adorn the religion, which they recommend, by the engaging lustre of a *pious* and *exemplary* life; because, if they so conduct themselves, they are expressly assured, that, *when the chief shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away* *.

HAVING thus given a short general account, of the nature and design of the ministerial office, and the obligations resulting from it; I shall add, in the same concise way, the substance of the *duty* of the *Christian people:* A matter of *no less* importance to the honour of *Christianity*, to the advancement of truth and virtue, and to the improvement and flourishing state of *Christian* societies; than the good conduct, prudence, and faithfulness, of ministers themselves. For, in every instance of *relative* duty, where there are *reciprocal* obligations on the parties *related* to

* 1 Pet. v. 4.

each

each other, be they either magiſtrates and ſubjects, parents and children, maſters and ſervants, or miniſters and people; a *failure*, on *either* ſide, muſt neceſſarily create diſorders, and be attended with fatal irregularities. This is the direct, and neceſſary, tendency of the thing, the unalterable conſtitution of nature; and in the caſe, which I am now particularly to conſider, it is confirmed, beyond all diſpute, by conſtant obſervation and experience.

THE *faults* of *Chriſtian miniſters*, as I have before obſerved, have been frequently complained of, and expoſed in the blackeſt colours. But, though the clamour of the *infidel*, and of the profane *libertine*, has commonly reſted and centered *here*; has there been *no other* juſt cauſe of complaint? Has the *irregular* behaviour been *confined* to this quarter *only?* No man can aſſert, or honeſtly venture even to inſinuate, this, who knows any thing of the *hiſtory* of the church, or of the *preſent ſtate* of religion amongſt us. 'On the contrary, it is moſt notorious, that through the peoples *indifference*, and *lukewarmneſs*, ſerious piety, and the practice of morality, have wofully *declined*, under miniſters the moſt compleatly furniſhed; of the moſt amiable and engaging qualifications; and of exemplary integrity, and diligence. The peoples *pride*, and *cenſoriouſneſs*, their bitter *animoſities* and *diſſentions*, their inflexible *ſtiffneſs*, their *narrow ſentiments*, and the *diſcouragement*, they have given, to a free and ingenuous enquiry into the ſenſe of Scripture, have produced the utmoſt confuſion; and I may, indeed, take upon me to ſay, that they are among the chief cauſes of a *weak*, *unimproving*, and *injudicious* miniſtry; the reaſon, why ſome, of the moſt *deſerving*, have been *obſtructed* in their *uſefulneſs*, and a *ſtrong temptation*, with others, to *prevarication*, and

and *hypocriſy*.' I mention theſe things, not to caſt a reproach upon any *particular* denomination of *Chriſtians* (for *all* are, in ſome degree, *guilty*) but only to ſhew, of what vaſt conſequence it is, that the *peoples* duty be rightly underſtood, and carefully practiſed.

THE FIRST branch of the *peoples* duty, to their *miniſters*, (which I am naturally led to conſider, becauſe it is, indeed, the ſpring and neceſſary ſupport of all the reſt) is 'a *reſpectful* behaviour, and treating, them at all times, with *due eſteem* and *honour*.' But, leſt this ſhould be liable to miſconſtructions, and be thought, to ſavour ſomewhat of *arrogance*, when urged by one of my character; I beg leave to explain my meaning more particularly, and to be underſtood, with the following *reſtrictions*.

I WOULD by no means, then, be thought an *advocate* for *unſkilful pretenders*, who are groſsly unqualified for the great work of inſtructing others; nor for the *lazy*, and *vicious*, who are a ſcandal to their profeſſion; nor for *proud impoſers*, who endeavour to enſlave the conſciences of mankind; but only for perſons of *real merit*; of *ability*, *zeal*, and *faithfulneſs* in their work, and who, inſtead of *lording it over* GOD'S *heritage*, are *enſamples to the flock* *. Nor is the *reſpect*, which I plead for, 'an *abſolute ſubmiſſion* to the ſentiments of any miniſters, however worthily eſteemed, for their learning, and piety.'

FOR if *Chriſtians* blindly follow their ſpiritual guides, and ſwallow all their doctrines implicitely, I am ſenſible, that they

* 1 Pet. v. 3.

lie open to endleſs *impoſitions*, and can have no guard, againſt the moſt ſtupid *enthuſiaſm*, nor even againſt *irreligion* itſelf. On the contrary, the more *freely* their opinions are examined, by the univerſal rule of *right reaſon*, and the primitive ſtandard of *revealed religion*, thoſe, under their care, are more likely to improve in *Chriſtian* and divine knowledge, and to be engaged, and fixed, in the univerſal practice of *virtue*.

I WOULD therefore, inſtead of diſcouraging, earneſtly recommend, an *impartial ſtudy* of the *holy ſcriptures*, as the *natural way*, for men to form a *conſiſtent*, and *rational*, ſcheme of belief and practice; *juſt* notions of GOD; and of the extent of *religious* and *moral* obligations. By this means, the *Chriſtian people* will have a *ſtraight* and *eaſy* rule to go by, and build their hopes of happineſs on a *ſolid* foundation; whereas, the *neglect* of it has introduced incomprehenſible articles of *faith*; doctrines prejudicial to *true goodneſs*; gloomy, diſtruſtful, ſentiments of the DEITY; and ſuperſtitious diſtracting *terrors*.

AGAIN, reading the *ſcriptures*, with impartiality, will inſpire ſincere and honeſt minds with *humility*, and *benevolence*, with *moderation*, and *forbearance* and mutual *candour*: But, the neglect of it multiplies blind and violent *diſputes*, and propagates a wild furious *zeal*, without knowledge, or diſcretion.

AND to mention, at preſent but one advantage more of what I am now recommending——By this means, common *Chriſtians* will better *underſtand* the *grounds* of their faith, and, conſequently, be more firmly *eſtabliſhed* in it. They will be more fully acquainted, with the *intrinſic excellence* of the doctrine

trine of *Chriſtianity*, and the ſtrength and weight of its *external proofs:* And ſo will be believers, not upon the foot of mere *tradition*, and *authority* (which confirm *all* religions equally) but upon rational, *conviction*, and *choice.*——From all which premiſes, it is natural both for miniſters and people, to infer, that, to *ſearch the ſcriptures* * is the *univerſal duty* of *Chriſtians*; and their being at liberty to do this, unmoleſted, and unterrified, by an *anti-chriſtian* oppreſſion, I ſincerely think (and would to GOD, that they all regarded it in the ſame light) is the *higheſt*, and moſt *valuable*, of their outward *Chriſtian* privileges.

'AND, now, is there any thing like *lordlineſs*, any thing like *ſpiritual tyranny*, in all this? Any thing, but what tends to *openneſs* and *enlargement* of mind? It muſt, upon theſe principles, be entirely the people's *own fault*, if they are *ignorant*, *enſlaved*, *bigotted:* And they ſhould complain leſs of *prieſtly craft*, and much more, than they are apt to do, of *ſelf-deceit*, and *ſelf-impoſition.*' For when they are, at any time, exhorted to *obey*, and to *ſubmit themſelves* †, this is only ſo far, as they are obliged to *ſubmit* to *any other* wiſe, and rational, inſtitution: It is not to ſuch *rulers* [or guides] as are allowed to exerciſe a *dominion* over their *faith*; but to ſuch, as are *only* appointed to be their *inſtructors* in true *Chriſtianity*, and the *helpers* of their purity, and *joy*.

FINALLY, 'the *reſpect*, that is due to *miniſters*, is not claimed on account of any ſingular *merit* in them; and much leſs, on account of mere *titles*, and outward *diſtinctions*; or of any indelible *authority*, or inherent *ſanctity*, inſeparable from the office itſelf; but for the *uſefulneſs* of the miniſterial character, when

* John v. 39. † Heb. xii. 7, 17.

rightly and honourably ſupported.' Accordingly, we find, that St. *Paul* exhorted the *Theſſalonians*, to *know them who laboured among them, and were over them in the Lord, and admoniſhed them; and to eſteem them very highly, in love, for their* works ſake *: Which, ſurely, is ſo far from being an *exorbitant* and *ambitious* claim, that it is rather enforced, by all principles of reaſon, and generoſity.

BESIDES, as it is impoſſible, that the *weight*, and *credit* of any conſiderable character ſhould be maintained, if thoſe, who are inveſted with it, are *ſlighted*, and *vilified*, it from hence neceſſarily follows, 'that the diſreſpect, ſhewn to the *faithful miniſters* of *Chriſt*, is not likely to terminate in their *perſons*, but tends to bring the *office* itſelf into contempt. And a *deſpiſed* miniſtry has always been, and ever will be, in proportion, an *unſucceſsful* one.' Let the people, therefore, take heed, that neither a blind zeal, nor haughtineſs, nor paſſion, nor a petulant captious temper, be ever ſuffered to hurry matters on to this *extreme*, to the diſcredit of *Chriſtianity*, and the obſtructing its *progreſs*.

'ANOTHER part of the duty of *Chriſtian* people towards their miniſters, is, to allow them a *proper ſupport*.' I need not inſiſt long on this, becauſe every man's own reaſon, if he allows himſelf to think at all about it, muſt convince him, that it is a branch of natural *equity*——That they, who *entirely devote* their *labours* to promote the knowledge, and practice, of *Chriſtianity*, and conſequently, the higheſt happineſs of mankind, and deprive themſelves oftentimes, upon that account, of very conſiderable *worldly advantages*, which they might *otherwiſe* obtain, ſhould

* 1 Theſ. v. 12, 13.

receive

receive a *ſubſiſtence* from thoſe, to whom they miniſter; and, I may add, a *comfortable*, and *honourable*, ſubſiſtence, in proportion to the importance and uſefulneſs of the *ſervice*, in which they are engaged

AND this *claim*, ſo agreeable to all principles of *natural juſtice*, the *Goſpel* has *confirmed* in ſuch ſtrong terms, as will admit of no evaſion. Thus, St. *Paul* enjoins, that *he, who is taught in the word*, ſhould *communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things* *. And, in his firſt epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, there is a very ſingular and remarkable paſſage, to the ſame purpoſe. *Have we not power* (ſays he) *to eat, and to drink? Have we not power* (or a *right*) *to lead about a ſiſter, a wife, as well as other Apoſtles? ——Who goeth a warfare any time, at his own charges? Or, who planteth a vine-yard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I theſe things, as a man? Or, ſaith not the law the ſame alſo? For it is written, in the law of* Moſes, *thou ſhalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox, that treadeth out the corn. Doth* GOD *take care for* oxen? *Or, ſaith he it, altogether, for* our ſakes? *For* our ſakes, *no doubt*, this *is written: That he, that plougheth, ſhould plough in hope; and that he, that threſheth in hope, ſhould be partaker of his hope. If we have ſown unto you, ſpiritual things*, is it *a great thing, if we ſhall reap your carnal things? Do ye not know, that they, who miniſter about holy things, live* of the things *of the temple? And they, who wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even ſo, hath the* Lord *ordained, that they, who* preach *the Goſpel, ſhould* (though, without having ſpecified any *particular way*, in which their *maintainance* is to be *raiſed*) live *of the Goſpel* †. Perſons, who have renounced *Chriſtianity*, or, who profeſs *no religion* at

* Gal. vi. 6. † 1 Cor. ix. 4—14.

all,

all, may think all this to be idle and chimerical talk; but certain I am, that no *Chriſtian* can help being convinced, that this is a *ſtanding*, and *indiſpenſable*, branch of his *Chriſtian* duty.

We may add to all this, that ſcarce any thing contributes, ſo viſibly to the honour, and uſefulneſs, of the miniſtry, as the raiſing the *condition* of thoſe, who are engaged in it, above the *anxious cares* of *indigence* and *poverty*. *Eaſy* circumſtances, in life, create *chearful active* ſpirits, *animate*, and *enlarge*, the mind, and inſpire a becoming *confidence*, and *reſolution*. Whereas, when a man is oppreſſed by *want*, his *faculties* are cramped, and cannot dilate, and exert themſelves to advantage: He abates of his *vigour*; and his beſt inſtructions loſe a great deal of their *weight*, and are treated, eſpecially by proud and haughty ſpirits, with *inſolence*, and *ſcorn*——An event this, that all, who wiſh well to the cauſe of *Chriſtianity*, and are deſirous, that the obligations of *virtue* be ſupported with *public energy*, and *reputation*, muſt, one would think, be ſollicitous, to the utmoſt of their power, to prevent.

Suffer me, however, juſt to add farther, that what I have now urged, notwithſtanding its importance, ſeems to be a point, that many *Chriſtian* ſocieties have been but *little ſenſible* of: Who, inſtead of affording their miniſters a *generous ſupport* (though a right of nature, and a right, which the *Goſpel* has, in the moſt diffuſe and ample terms, eſtabliſhed) act, as if they would *force* them, to the practice of *ſelf-denial*, and deprive them of the *virtue*, and *reward*, of *approved* and *voluntary* ſelf-denial; and who maintain ſuch a prodigious diſproportion, between their care, and expence, for *time*, and *eternity*, as if the preſent *animal Life* was the completion of their warmeſt deſires,

deſires, and the *health* and *immortality*, of their ſouls, but an inconſiderable ingredient in their happineſs.

BUT as this is a nice and tender topic, and my enlarging farther upon it may, in the opinion of ſome, look too much like *ſelf-intereſt*, I ſhall drop ſeveral other particulars, that might be mentioned: And for what has been already ſaid in general, the *neceſſities* of many worthy families, the plain *equity* of the caſe, and its being expreſsly inculcated in the *Chriſtian* revelation, will, I hope, be deemed a ſufficient apology. For myſelf, to obviate any *perſonal* reflections, I declare, that I have as much as I *deſire*, and more perhaps, than I could, in *modeſty*, *claim*.

IN the THIRD place, it is the duty of the *Chriſtian people* (to make uſe of an expreſſion of *ſcripture*, which might, *otherwiſe*, be ridiculed by the light wits of the preſent age, even though they have not yet proceeded ſo far, as *openly* to *diſclaim* all belief of *Chriſtianity*) 'it is, I ſay, the duty of the Chriſtian people, to attend on the *miniſtration of the word*——as well as on the other public ſervices of religion: For, without this, the office of a miniſter muſt be abſolutely *impertinent*, and *uſeleſs*; and it would be much more conſiſtent, to *declare againſt* it altogether, and *diſſolve* all religious ſocieties.

THE advantages of *public inſtruction*, and *ſocial worſhip* are very evident. They keep alive, a general ſenſe of a DEITY, and a *providence*, and of the great *obligations* of religion. And were it not for theſe *ſtated ſolemn* exerciſes (notwithſtanding accidental *abuſes*) it may be juſtly queſtioned, whether great numbers, even in *Chriſtian* countries, would not be quite over-run with ſottiſh *ignorance*, and *barbariſm*. To neglect, therefore,

public

public worſhip altogether, muſt be of very ill conſequence to the cauſe of *Chriſtianity*, and *common morality*. The *wiſeſt*, and *beſt*, will find their good diſpoſitions *improved* by it. Or if it was true, that they could expect no farther *proficiency* (as *arrogance* and *ſelf-conceit* may, perhaps, dictate; but which, I believe, no truly *modeſt* man will be forward to believe of himſelf) yet their *example* may be of great uſe, to quicken the *zeal* of *others*; and, on the contrary, their *totally abſenting* themſelves may *influence* many, who really want *inſtruction*, to do the like, and, in the end, beget in them an *indifference* about all religion.

But, with reſpect to *Chriſtians*, the obligation is ſtill more clear, and inconteſtable. For, of the *believers*, even in the *apoſtolic* times, this expreſs account is given, that they *all continued, with one accord, in prayer and ſupplication* *; that *they were* all, *with one accord, in one place* †; and that *they continued, ſtedfaſtly, in the Apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers* ‡.

And, that in theſe religious aſſemblies, there were *ſermons*, and *exhortations*, to the people, as well as *prayers*, and *thankſgivings*, offered to almighty God, is undeniable from the following paſſages: In which, it is aſſerted——of *Saul*, and *Barnabas*, that, *when they aſſembled themſelves with the church* at *Antioch* (where *the diſciples were firſt called* Chriſtians) *they taught much people* ‖; that, *upon the firſt day of the week, when the diſciples came together to break bread*, Paul *preached unto them* §. ——And he gives this account of *himſelf*, to the *elders of the*

* Acts i. 14. † Acts ii. 1. ‡ Ver. 42.
‖ Acts xi. 26. § Acts xx. 7.

church

church of *Epheſus*, that *he kept back*, from them, *nothing that was profitable* unto them; but had *taught* them *publickly*, as well as *from houſe to houſe*, *teſtifying both to the* Jews, *and alſo to the* Greeks, *repentance toward* GOD, *and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* *. The ſame thing is ſaid of the *Apoſtles* in general, *viz.* that, *they ceaſed not to teach*, and *preach Jeſus Chriſt* †. And, therefore, the author of the epiſtle to the *Hebrews* has thought it worthy, to be the matter of a direct *Apoſtolical* injunction, *to conſider one another*, *to provoke unto love*, *and to good works*; *not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together*, *as the manner of ſome* was ‡, even in thoſe *primitive* times of *Chriſtianity*. I may add to this, 'that it is proper, at leaſt in *general*, that the *Chriſtian* people ſhould *attend* the public offices of religion, in that *Chriſtian ſociety*, to which they more immediately *belong*, and for this plain and obvious reaſon; that, without this, it is ſcarce poſſible that *particular churches* ſhould ſubſiſt, nor, conſequently, that *public worſhip* itſelf ſhould be regularly maintained.'

I SHALL recommend one thing more, before I conclude this head, which is, that, in hearing the *word preached*, the hearers ought to take care, not to be influenced by vain *curioſity*; for then it will only yield a preſent trifling, and uſeleſs, amuſement: Nor ſhould they chiefly regard the *elegance* of a diſcourſe, and the *gracefulneſs* of the preacher's delivery; which, of itſelf, can only ſtrike the *fancy*, but neither rectify the *judgment*, nor improve the *moral character*: Much leſs, ought they to attend on the public exerciſes of religion, to indulge a *captious cavilling* humour, to ſpy out, and cenſure, *faults*, and criticize on the little *ſlips*, and *inaccuracies*, of the preacher; becauſe this

* Acts xx. 20, 21. † Chap. v. 42. ‡ Heb. x. 24, 25.

will feed *pride*, *ſelf-conceit*, and foment a ſpirit of *contention*. But we ſhould be principally careful to diveſt ourſelves of all *prejudice*, which renders the mind *unimpreſſible*, by the ſtrongeſt light, and evidence, of truth; which aggravates every *minute human frailty*, into a *fundamental error*; which no *eloquence* can move, no *force* of *reaſon* conquer.

FARTHER, 'it is an indiſpenſable part of the *people*'s duty, to allow their miniſters *to declare*, with *freedom*, *the whole counſel of* GOD *; *i.e.* every thing, which they *think* to be an important *truth*, or *duty*, of the *Goſpel*, how much ſoever it may *differ*, from *received* and *eſtabliſhed* ſentiments and forms.' Let there be no *reſtraint*, or *terror*; but the utmoſt *encouragement* given, to a free, and impartial, ſtudy of the holy Scriptures; ſince it is in this way alone, that a miniſter can *form* juſt notions of *Chriſtianity* himſelf, or be qualified for *explaining* it to others. And private *Chriſtians* can receive no *advantage* at all, from their miniſters *ſtudies*, if they confine him to certain favourite points, as a ſacred *ſtandard* of truth, which they are determined never to *recede* from.

CHRISTIANITY is a thing, no more to be learned *all at once* by the *miniſter*, than by the *private members* of the congregation. Let him be allowed, therefore, to give himſelf all the *ſcope*, that reaſon, and conſcience, and an ardent thirſt after knowledge, *require*; and the weakneſs, and inability of human nature, to comprehend *all truth*, will for ever *demand*. If, indeed, he is *infallible*, which we all know that *he* is not, as well as that *we ourſelves* are not, we are then *ſecure*; otherwiſe, it is abſolutely

* Acts xx. 27.

impoſſi-

impoſſible, that either party ſhould make any *proficiency*. Upon this abſurd ſuppoſition, we are *entrenched* in ignorance, within a *line*, that neither *reaſon*, nor *revelation*, can force.

But, above all, I would adviſe private *Chriſtians*, not to be ſo *arrogant*, and *preſumptuous*, as to be forward, upon every occaſion, to ſound the alarm of *hereſy*; which, in every age of the church, has been an engine of *ſcandal*, and *violence*, and the cauſe of endleſs *ſchiſms* and *confuſions*. For how unjuſtifiable muſt it be, to impute this heinous crime to men of *honeſt* principles, and *exemplary* lives, who are quite the *reverſe* of the *heretics*, mentioned in the New Teſtament; and who, if St. *Paul*'s authority be of any weight (who deſcribes them as perſons *ſelf-condemned*, and acted by *ambitious*, *factious*, *ſelfiſh* views) cannot poſſibly have incurred that *guilt*.

Again, 'another branch of the *peoples* duty is, to put the moſt *candid* conſtructions on their miniſters *publick diſcourſes*, and on *every part* of their *behaviour*.' Interpret nothing *rigorouſly*, that is capable of a more *favourable* ſenſe. *Paſs by* little *indiſcretions*; *conceal*, inſtead of *expoſing*, the common *frailties* of human nature, that are conſiſtent with general *integrity*. Expect nothing from them, beyond what the laws of *reaſon*, and *religion*, demand; nor form *different rules* for their conduct, with reſpect to the common incidents and concerns of life, from what other men are ſubject to.

If it ſhould be ſaid, that they are to be *examples* to the reſt of the world: I anſwer, *of what?* Of every thing truly *virtuous*, *praiſe-worthy*, and *upright*, it is allowed they ſhould be—But not of *enthuſiaſm* and *ſuperſtition*; not of a *ſour*, *moroſe* and *formal*,

behaviour; not of *spleen* and *melancholy*, and of *proud*, or *sullen*, *retirement* from the world; not of casting a *reproach* on the wisdom and goodness of providence, by refusing to enjoy those *common conveniencies*, and *accommodations*, which GOD has graciously provided, for the *delight* of human life——For these things are so far from being *parts* of true religion, that they are, rather, the direct *reverse* of it; that consisting, in a great measure, in the exercise of the *social virtues*; and *her ways* (being represented) as *ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace* *.

LET me add to this, 'that if you have conceived any *prejudice* against your minister, you ought to take the first opportunity, by a free *conversation* with him on the particular subject that gave *offence*, to get that prejudice *removed*; and not suffer it to *fix* and *grow* in the mind, till, at length, it becomes so *deeply* settled, as never to be *rooted out*. Perhaps, the matter may be *explained* to entire *satisfaction*; or, at least, the *malignity* of it may be greatly *mitigated*: But, however that be, it is very great *injustice* to a minister's character, not to put it in his *power* to *clear* himself; or, to entertain *prejudices* against him, without being sure, whether they are *well grounded*, or *not*. And if the *same method* was followed by men, *universally*, with respect to each other; considering the *suspicious* temper of the world, how liable they are to *mistake*, and how prone to *misrepresent*, universal discord, and mischief, would be unavoidable.

THE last advice that I shall give (which may be thought perhaps to be more of a prudential, than of a strictly religious, nature) is, 'that the *people* engage their minister, as little as possi-

* Prov. iii. 17.

ble,

ble, in private *quarrels*, and *diſputes*, either as a *principal*, an *evidence*, or a *judge*; leſt they prejudice him in the *eſteem*, of one or other of the *contending* parties, and, thereby, leſſen his *uſefulneſs*, upon the whole.' They ſhould chuſe, rather, to *refer* the matter to ſome more *private friends*; who may, perhaps, have equal *abilities* to decide, in *nice* and *critical* caſes of this kind, and with leſs danger of giving *offence*. But if any thing of this nature muſt come under the *cognizance* of the miniſter, it is but common juſtice, that he be left to determine, with perfect *freedom*, as the *equity* of the caſe appears to lie; and that none be *diſpleaſed* with him, for making, what he *thinks*, a *right* deciſion.

I MENTION this *particularly*, becauſe it has, to my own knowledge, occaſioned irreconcileable *differences*; and indeed is, in itſelf, a very *probable*, and *fruitful*, ſource of *diſcord*. But, if the miniſter happens to be *abuſed*, and *perſecuted*, on this, or any other, account, it is the *peoples* duty to *defend* him, and *vindicate* his perſonal honour, and integrity: It is moſt *ungenerous*, and *baſe*, to *deſert* him in ſuch an extremity (when he ſuffers, for an inflexible adherence to the cauſe of *honeſty*, and *truth*) whatever be the *character* and *power* of his oppreſſor. And ſuch a *mean treacherous* condeſcenſion in thoſe, who, he had reaſon to expect, would be his *friends*, and ſupport his *innocence*, may not only put him out of a capacity of *preſent* ſervice, but unqualify him, in a great meaſure, for *future* uſefulneſs.

THUS have I finiſhed my diſcourſes, on what are peculiarly ſtiled relative duties: In the chapters that ſtill remain, the ſubjects will be, as follow, *viz.*

A GENE-

A GENERAL, *ſummary*, account of *Juſtice*: And the *Chriſtian rule*, of *Equity*, particularly explained.

OF *Self-love*, and its *Exceſſes*: Or *Selfiſhneſs*, and *Benevolence*, compared.

OF *particular branches* of *univerſal Benevolence*—And FIRST, of *Mercy*, in its ſeveral parts.

OF *private Friendſhip*; and *the Love of our Country*.

OF *Unity*; and *Peaceableneſs*.

OF *Humility*; and *Meekneſs*.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

A general, ſummary, *account of* Juſtice: *And, the* Chriſtian rule, *of* Equity, *particularly explained.*

THE whole of *Juſtice* in general will, I believe, be comprehended under the following heads; to which, all the different *branches*, and *offices*, of it may eaſily be reduced ——'An exact and ſcrupulous regard to the *rights* of others, with a deliberate purpoſe, to preſerve them, upon all occaſions, *ſacred* and *inviolate*; and, from this *fair* and *equitable temper*, performing every neceſſary *act* of juſtice, that relates to their *perſons*, or *properties*: Being *juſt* to their *merit*, and *juſt* to their very *infirmities*, by making all the *allowances* in their favour, which their *circumſtances* require, and a good natured and equitable *conſtruction*, of *particular caſes*, will admit of: Being *true* to our *friendſhips*, to our *promiſes*, and *contracts*: Being juſt in our *traffic*, juſt in our *demands*, and juſt, by obſerving a due *moderation* and *proportion*, even in our *reſentments*.' The *diſtinct offices* of juſtice are, indeed, ſomewhat various, as men's *conditions* and *characters* differ; but the general *obligation*, and the general *rules*, are one and the ſame.

LET me juſt add here, that the virtue of *juſtice* is not only the main *pillar*, and *ſtrength* of ſocieties; but, as it were,

were, the *eſſential* and *vital ſpirit*, by which they *ſubſiſt*: And, that the contrary vices, of '*diſſimulation*, *deceitful compliment*, *lying*, *fraud*, *treachery*; of *cenſoriouſneſs*, *detraction*, *ſlander*, *undermining arts*, rigorous *oppreſſion*, and *injury* of every kind; are directly calculated to *diſſolve* the *frame* of all governments, to render a *regular ſocial life* abſolutely impoſſible, and *human life* itſelf unſupportable.

But, we ſhall have a *clearer idea* of this virtue, if we conſider diſtinctly the *Chriſtian rule* of equity; and the occaſion, on which it was introduced by our Saviour, as an inviolable part of the *moral law*, in his ſermon on the mount.

In this diſcourſe, we have the largeſt *ſcheme* of morality, in *one view*, that is to be found in the whole New Teſtament. The particular deſign of it was, to *reſtore* the law of nature to its original *purity*, in thoſe inſtances, in which it had been either *partially* ſtated, or groſsly *corrupted*, by the gloſſes and comments of the *Jewiſh* doctors; and, by a multitude of *vain traditions*, impoſed upon the people as *ſacred*, which, in a great meaſure, *vacated* the *obligation* of it. We are not, therefore, to expect, in this diſcourſe, a *complete abſtract* of *Chriſtian* morals, in a *regular connected* ſyſtem; becauſe it was chiefly intended to rectify *abuſes*, and remove blind *prejudices*, which *enſlaved* men's minds, and *perverted* their notions of good and evil: It is natural however to obſerve, that the *virtues*, therein recommended, are rationally *explained*, reduced to their right *principles*, urged in their proper *extent*, and enforced by the moſt powerful, ſublime, and generous *motives*; and that the ſtricteſt care is taken, to inculcate the neceſſity of good *inward diſpoſitions*, and regular *paſſions*; and make us, principally, to regard that *integrity*, and

and *rectitude* of *heart*, in which the perfection of human nature conſiſts.

THE *Jews*, it muſt be owned, had very *ſtrong* and *exalted* ſentiments of virtue, communicated to them in the writings of the *Old Teſtament*; and, eſpecially, by the *prophets*; who were ſent, when they were moſt *degenerate*, moſt extravagantly zealous for *ceremonies*, but looſe and diſſolute in their *morals*, to bring them back to the practice of the eternal rules of *truth*, and *righteouſneſs*. But, notwithſtanding this, at the time of *Chriſt*'s coming, their *piety* was little more than *formality* and *ſuperſtition*; and yet, upon *this* they highly *valued* themſelves, and made a public *oſtentation* of what was diſhonourable to GOD, and a reproach to *human reaſon:* They had learned, it ſeems, in *thoſe days*, to ſeparate *religion* from *morality*. It was, therefore, of the utmoſt importance, that our bleſſed Saviour ſhould, particularly, *enforce* the laws of *juſtice* and *charity*; and repreſent them as *eſſential* points, in the religion of *Moſes*, and the *prophets*; making them, at the ſame time, *indiſpenſable* branches of his *own ſcheme* of *religion:* For, by this means, none can hope to atone, for *defects* in the *ſocial* virtues, by *ceremonioufneſs*, and the warmeſt raptures of *enthuſiaſm*,——without oppoſing, at once, the light of *nature*, and the principles and dictates of *revelation*

THIS is expreſsly aſſerted, with reſpect to the great law of *juſtice*, viz. *All things, whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do ye even ſo to them* *. And the great *uſefulneſs*, of this general *maxim*, appears from hence, 'that it is a *com-*

* Mat. vii. 12.

pendium of *equity*, an *abridgement* of all the rules of it, in a narrow compaſs, eaſily *underſtood* and *remembred*; and, at the ſame time, an *intelligible* and *plain direction* to us, in every part of our conduct, which concerns the *intereſts* and *rights* of our fellow-creatures.' This ſhall, hereafter, be more particularly conſidered: But, in the mean time, it is highly proper, that we premiſe ſome obſervations, for the *explanation* of the rule itſelf. And,

First, in order to the right interpretation of it, 'we muſt make all due *allowances* for the different *ſtations*, *circumſtances*, and *characters* of men.' It has been neceſſary for me, to remark often in theſe diſcourſes, that the wiſdom of providence has made a great *diſtinction* between mankind, with reſpect to natural *abilities*, and outward *advantages*; and that, from hence, ariſe various *degrees* in human life, in a natural *ſubordination* to each other. Now this *variety* of *conditions*, muſt render *different meaſures* of conduct, not only *becoming*, but *neceſſary*; not only *ſuitable* to the reſpective *characters*, to preſerve order, propriety, and decency, but abſolutely requiſite to the well-being and ſtrength of *ſocieties*: And, on the contrary, the bringing all ranks of men upon *a level* by inſiſting on the *ſame uniform behaviour* in all, would make the world one wild, and endleſs, ſcene of *extravagance* and *confuſion*.

The *rule* of *juſtice* therefore, preſcribed by *Chriſt*, muſt not be interpreted ſo *looſely*, and in ſuch an *indeterminate* manner as this, 'but as a rule of *proportion*, which ſuppoſes ſome *equality* in the circumſtances; or, in other words, obliges us to do *that* for *others*, and *that only*, which, in the *ſame ſtate* or *relation*, we deſire that *they* ſhould do for *us*.' Thus, for example, and

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to put an inſtance which is abſolutely unexceptionable——A *prince* may juſtly demand *reſpect* and *obedience* from his *ſubjects*, but he is not bound for that reaſon, to treat *them* with the *like* marks of deference and ſubmiſſion; but only, to *rule* with that *gentleneſs* and *clemency*, that tender regard to the *public welfare*, that watchful and affectionate care of his peoples *liberties*, and of the *rights* of each particular member of the community, as he *himſelf*, were he in the rank of a *ſubject*, would expect from a *wiſe* and *equitable* governour. The ſame reaſoning will eaſily be carried, through all the *other* relations of life; ſome of which are neceſſarily *inferior* to, and *dependent* upon, others: And, to extend the rule *farther*, is confounding the *nature* of things; and attempting to eſtabliſh a *pretended* ſcheme of *equity*, by the deſtruction of *truth*, and *reaſon*.

AGAIN, ſuppoſing the *circumſtances* of the perſons to be the *ſame*, which is evidently neceſſary, in order to make this general *rule* agreeable to the natural principles of *Juſtice*; we muſt interpret it with this farther *limitation*, *viz.* 'that we are *not bound*, in all reſpects, to do *that* to *others*, that we may *wiſh* and *deſire* they would do for *us*; but only *ſuch things*, as are, at leaſt, *innocent*, and conſiſtent with *virtue* and *religion*.' For this is recommended to us as a rule of *reaſon*, of *univerſal* and *eternal* obligation; and is not, therefore, to be framed by *ſelfiſhneſs*, *fancy*, *prejudice*, or any other *principles*, that are ſo *irregular* and *variable*. To aſſert, that *one man* ought to behave *unreaſonably* towards *another*, only becauſe he would fooliſhly have *that other* to behave in ſuch *a manner* towards *him*——is making *falſhood* and *error* the foundation and teſt of *right conduct*: It is ſetting up an *imaginary rule* of equity, againſt the eſſential and indiſpenſable laws of equity: It repreſents *ſocial virtue* as

entirely *arbitrary*, and the *difference* of good and evil as *uncertain*, and *indeterminable*: And, conſequently, not only contradicts the deſign of *Chriſtianity*, but ſubverts *natural religion* itſelf.

I AM aware, that it may be objected here, 'that though *right reaſon* be the *ultimate rule* of our conduct, yet every man's *judgment*, and *ſenſe* of things, is, to him, the *immediate* rule: That *reaſon*, with reſpect to *particular perſons*, is *their own* reaſon, and the *fitneſs* of *action* can, to them, be no *other*, but what they apprehend to be fit: So that it is needleſs, it may be ſaid, to put in this *reſtriction*, that we are *only* bound to do to *others*, what we may *innocently*, and conſiſtently with the principles of *virtue*, *deſire* they ſhould do to *us*: Becauſe if we *think* it *innocent*, or *inſiſt* upon it as a matter of *right*, our *obligation* is exactly the ſame, as it would *have been*, if the thing was in *reality*, as it is in *our notion* of it. Our Saviour's words, therefore, muſt be taken *ſtrictly* and *literally*, *thus far* at leaſt, that we ſhould treat our *fellow-creatures* in the *ſame manner*, not only as we *may*, but as we *think we may*, reaſonably expect they ſhould treat *us*, in *like circumſtances*.'

TO this I anſwer, 'that what is our *duty*, by this *rule* of *juſtice*, is a conſideration entirely *diſtinct*, from what we are *obliged* to, in order to demonſtrate our *integrity*, in purſuing the *dictates* of our underſtanding, and conſcience.' A man, of an *erroneous* conſcience, forfeits the character of an *honeſt* man, if he does not *follow* the *guidance* of it; but if he *does*, he may, notwithſtanding, be *wrong* in his conduct. Thus, for inſtance, if any one thinks it his *duty* to *perſecute* his neighbour, for not being of the ſame *faith* with himſelf; notwithſtanding the plea of

of *conſcience*, he *violates*, in a moſt glaring and ſhameful manner, the immutable *laws* of *righteouſneſs* and *charity*.

To apply this to the preſent argument; it will undoubtedly be allowed, with reſpect to this *rule* of equity, that every man ought to *act*, agreeably to his *own ſentiments* of the true *meaning*, and *extent* of it: But it cannot, from hence, be inferred, 'that it is, really, *no more* in *itſelf*, than what each particular perſon *apprehends* it *to be*, and, conſequently, mere *opinion* and *fancy*;' becauſe, to ſuppoſe this muſt be, in effect, to aſſert, that truth and falſhood are, *equally*, the *ſtandard* of right and wrong. Nay, as it is natural to preſume, that *opinions* will widely *differ*, the *ſenſe* of this rule muſt be infinitely *various*, and *inconſiſtent* with itſelf; but, in truth, if there be any thing of *inſtruction* or *uſe* in it, the *meaning* of it muſt be ſomething *certain*, and *determinate*, and its *nature*, and rational *deſign*, muſt remain exactly the *ſame*, however mankind may *differ*, in their *explication* of it. If it ſhould be enquired, after all, what is the *rule* of *reaſon* in the preſent caſe, I have already ſtated it thus: 'That we are bound to do for *others*, in the *ſame ſtation*, and *relations*, of life, *only thoſe things*, which we may *innocently*, and *conſiſtently* with the general duties of *religion*, deſire they ſhould do for *us*.'

But, in all inſtances of *generoſity*, if we expect, that our fellow-creatures ſhould *exceed*, what they are *ſtrictly obliged to*, by the rules of *juſtice* and common *benevolence*, it muſt be *right* for us (provided we diſpoſe only of our *own property*, and are *injurious* to none, who have an *equitable claim* to our aſſiſtance, and ſupport) to be generous in the *ſame meaſure*, and *degree*. And the

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inconveniencies, we may ſuffer, by being thus *high* in our expectations, by carrying our notion of generoſity *too far*, and thinking it our *duty* to *practice* accordingly, will, very probably, have this effect upon us; to put us on *re-examining* the *rule* of *right*, and, by this means, to enable us to *fix* it, in a more *accurate* and *impartial* manner.

I SHALL only add to the things which have been already offered, that the rule, which I am now explaining, may be turned ſeveral ways; and conſidered in a variety of lights; each of which will be more immediately uſeful, according to the *particular caſes*, that occur to us. The *general ſenſe* is, in all, much the ſame; but the *illuſtration* is ſomewhat different. For example, if we are ſolicited, to do any office of *benevolence* and *friendſhip*, it may be propereſt for us, to take it in that preciſe view, in which our Saviour has repreſented it; *viz.* 'that *whatſoever*, we *would*, *that men ſhould do to* us, we ought alſo *to do to them*.'——To prevent acts of *abuſe* and *injury*, the oppoſite view of it ſeems to be peculiarly adapted; *viz.* 'that *whatſoever*, we *would not*, that others ſhould do to us, we *ought not* to do to them: Or elſe, that we be careful that there be *nothing*, in any part of *our* conduct towards our fellow-creatures, but what, upon mature deliberation, we ſhould think *reaſonable* in *their* conduct towards us,'——And, finally, to put a ſtop to all *extravagant* demands, all *extraordinary* pretenſions, and claims of right, from *others*, the rule may be put in a new light, and ſtated thus, 'that *whatſoever*, we ſhould think *unreaſonable*, to *do* for any man, were he in *our* circumſtances, and we in *his*, it is againſt all *proportion*, all principles of *equity*, to *expect* from him.'

SUFFER

SUFFER me to make one obſervation more, before I conclude this head, which is this, 'that though, as has been already ſuggeſted, in all caſes, that are for the *good* of particular perſons, and not *detrimental* to ſociety, we may innocently fix our *expectations* from *them*, as the *meaſure* of *our* behaviour towards them; it will not hold true on the contrary, *viz.* that if I think it *allowable*, that *another* ſhould take *advantages* againſt me, to my prejudice, I may lawfully do the *ſame:* Becauſe, I can have no juſt pretence to *injure* him in *his* property, though I may have a right to *diſpoſe* of *my own*.' There is no *parity* in the circumſtances; which there muſt be to render the action equitable: For if he knows that *I conſent*, he does *me* no *wrong*, but, till I am fully aſſured of *his conſent*, I am highly *injurious* to *him*. And if this ſingle thing was but fairly conſidered, we ſhould not, I am perſwaded, find ſo many *mean arts* uſed, nor ſuch ugly appearances of *treachery* and *deceit*, in the *commerce* of mankind; but it would be carried on in a more open and generous way, and more free from the very *ſuſpicion* of baſeneſs, and diſhoneſty. This may ſuffice for the explication of this rule of equity: Let me now endeavour, briefly, to ſhew the great *propriety*, and *excellence* of it.

AND this appears, FIRST, fom hence, 'that *the reaſonableneſs* of it is very *plain* and *obvious* to *all* capacities; upon which account, it is the better fitted to be an *univerſal* rule.' In proportion as any *law*, or *rule* of *action*, is obſcure, perplexed, or doubtful; it loſes juſt ſo much of its authority, and influence. In like manner, if the *reaſons* of it are too ſubtle and abſtracted, and lie too deep for vulgar diſcernment; it muſt, of conſequence, have the leſs regard paid to it. And, if it be bound upon us by

mere

mere authority, it cannot come with that weight, and univerſal conſtraining efficacy, as if *authority* and *reaſon* went together, and joined to enforce it. *Authority* may prevail with men to *obey*, while the ſenſe of it remains ſtrong in the mind; but if it appears to be *arbitrarily* exerciſed, it will not only be the leſs reverenced, but perſons will be apt to imagine, that as it had no reaſon for *giving* the law, it can have none for *inſiſting* on the *obſervation* of it; and that what was *ſo lightly* enjoined, might be *as lightly* diſpenſed with. And as for *metaphyſical* arguments, and *nice refined* ſpeculations, what *ſmall effect* have they always had, in *regulating* the conduct of mankind, againſt the force of inclination, prejudice, or intereſt? They pleaſe as amuſements, gratify curioſity, are admired as the exerciſes of an acute genius; but it is ſcarce ever known, that, of themſelves alone, they leave ſuch *impreſſions*, as *warm* the heart, and *rectify* the errors of the life. But thoſe things, the *reaſons* of which are obvious, and always appear in a clear and diſtinct light, ſtrike powerfully, and are of *general* influence. We cannot *ſuppreſs* our *ſenſe* of their importance, ſo far, but that it will always *riſe* again, upon the leaſt reflection; and, either prevail with us to act conformably to our inward convictions, or fill us with uneaſineſs and remorſe. When we ſee clearly the *wiſdom* and *uſefulneſs* of any rule of morality, we muſt be the more eaſily *diſpoſed* to yield obedience to it; and *inclination*, and *duty*, will aſſiſt and ſtrengthen each other.

Now this is the caſe, with reſpect to the *general rule* of equity, which we are at preſent conſidering: The *fitneſs* of it is next to *ſelf-evident*. It is not to be *deduced*, by a long train of reaſoning, from *obſcure* and *remote* principles; but is founded on this *ſingle* truth, and ſprings neceſſarily from it (a truth eaſily apprehended,

hended, and aſſented to by all) *viz.* the *natural equality* of mankind. For though there is a great difference in the capacities of men, and the external advantages which they enjoy; and conſequently, as was before ſuggeſted, *one* preciſe method of behaviour cannot, with any propriety, be preſcribed to *all*; yet conſidered as *men*, united in one *common* nature, they are *ſo far equal*, that, in the ſame *circumſtances*, they have all a right to the ſame *treatment*. The *ſuperior*, for inſtance, ought not to uſe his *inferior* more *harſhly*, than the *inferior*, if he was advanced, and the *other* in a low depreſſed condition, might juſtly uſe him. And whoever refuſes to ſubmit to this rule of proportion, 'acts not as a *man* towards *men*; but as if he was, originally, of a *different* and a *higher* order; and, conſequently, had not an *accidental*, but a *natural*, claim, to peculiar *diſtinction* and *reſpect*.'

But farther, as the reaſons, of this *Chriſtian rule* of juſtice, are very plain, and univerſally obvious; 'it is likewiſe of a vaſt *compaſs*, extending to *all* the duties of *ſocial* life, in every ſituation and character.' It takes in, not only every part of *ſtrict juſtice*; but all the various branches of *charity* and compaſſion, and all the proper offices of *friendſhip*, and *generoſity*. For, under each of theſe heads, it is as *true*, as in matters of mere juſtice, and founded on the ſame *general principles*, that *whatſoever* we may *reaſonably* expect from *others*, *they* may *as* reaſonably expect from *us*. Again, it is a law to our *thoughts*, as well as to our outward behaviour. For if we imagine *ourſelves* to be *injured*, when any entertain an ill opinion of us, through a raſh and ill-natured prejudice, or on weak or improbable grounds; and expreſs an high reſentment againſt us, for ſlight and involuntary offences, *we* ought, ourſelves, carefully to *avoid* the like *exceſſes* of cenſoriouſneſs, and malice.

FINALLY, this excellent rule reaches to every difference of *advantages*, whether natural or acquired; to every *age* and *character*; ſince no caſe, no circumſtance, can be *exempted* from it, which relates to the conduct of *mankind* towards *each other*. For, though it is not in our power, *actually* to *alter* the ſtate of the world; yet, in every inſtance that can be named, we can *ſuppoſe* a change of conditions, or, *imagine* ourſelves to be in other circumſtances. The *rich man* may, in idea and reflection, ſubſtitute himſelf in the place of the *poor*; a *parent* in that of his *children*; a *maſter* in that of his *ſervants*; and ſo on the contrary: And then he has nothing to do but to conſider, what he might fairly demand, if either of theſe was his *real ſituation*, and to make *that* the *general guide*, and *rule*, of his actions. Thus the mutual, and neceſſary, duties of all the ſeveral *relations* in human life, may, by the help of this *one principle*, be impartially ſtated, and thoroughly underſtood. Which leads me to another remark, that is a farther demonſtration of the excellency and uſefulneſs of it, *viz.*——

'THAT it is a rule, *eaſily applicable* to particular caſes.' There is no way of proving this, which is a matter of *fact*, like that of producing direct and unexceptionable examples of it, and trying, how it will ſucceed in the application. If the experiment we make anſwers the end propoſed, this muſt afford the fulleſt and higheſt conviction: Whereas reaſonings drawn from the *abſtract nature* of things, and not confirmed by obſervation, are not only, to the generality, more intricate in themſelves, but more liable to diſpute and evaſion.

WOULD

WOULD we, then, that our *fellow-creatures regard* us, according to our *real merit?* If ſo, it muſt be *our duty*, by the rule of equity, to render honour to whom honour is due. Would we take it *ill*, if they ſhould *repine* at our happineſs? Do we expect, that they *ſympathize* with us in our afflictions, and *bear a part* in the joy of our proſperity? We are, then, bound conſtantly to maintain the ſame *friendly* diſpoſitions, and *generous* concern for the welfare of all mankind. Or would we think it *hard* to be unjuſtly *traduced* and vilified, or, if any man ſhould ſeek to advance his own *intereſt*, by methods that tend to our *diſhonour*, or *prejudice?* This clearly ſhews, that our reaſon *condemns* theſe vices, and that *we ought*, likewiſe, to *abſtain* from them; and on the contrary (ſince we eſteem it a debt of *juſtice*, owing to *ourſelves*) to be exceedingly careful of our neighbour's character, to take all opportunities of defending it, when it is weakly, or maliciouſly, attacked; to do every thing, in our power, to ſecure to him his juſt praiſe and eſteem, and chearfully to ſacrifice many little conveniences, to promote his greater good.

THIS matter may be farther illuſtrated, by inſtances taken from the *commercial* concerns of life. 'Should we imagine ourſelves to be treated *unfairly*, if any ſhould impoſe on our *ignorance*, and *unſkilfulneſs?* Should we think we were *cheated*, if *bad* wares ſhould be *ſold* to us, *knowingly*, at the higheſt price that is given for the *beſt?* Sould we eſteem it an argument of a *baſe* and *ungenerous* ſpirit, for a man *treacherouſly* to abuſe the *confidence*, that is repoſed in him, and uſe us the *worſe*, becauſe we profeſſed our *want* of *judgment*, and truſted entirely to his

honour? Should we look upon him as *diſhoneſt*, who when his circumſtances were *deſperate*, on a *bare poſſibility* of *retrieving* a broken fortune, demanded *credit* for *much more* than he was ever *likely* to be able to *pay*; and thereby involved, together with *himſelf*, many innocent and induſtrious *families*, in want and miſery?——We muſt, then, be utterly inexcuſeable, and ſelf-condemned, if *theſe faults* are found in *our own* conduct; and all the *bad characters* which we are ſo liberal in beſtowing on ſuch *offenders* as theſe, when our *private intereſt* is immediately affected, will be *our own*, with a double ſhare of guilt and infamy.' And whoſoever carefully attends to the *Chriſtian rule* of *equity*, muſt clearly perceive *his duty* in theſe, and moſt other, caſes, that can happen in *ſociety*.

I SHALL conclude what relates to the article of *Juſtice*, with only obſerving, that all *revealed* religion recommends it, in the ſtongeſt manner, as an immutable branch of virtue, that can never be diſpenſed with; and, without which, all the forms, and the moſt ſplendid external pomp, of piety are not, merely, inſignificant and trifling, but deſpicable and hateful ſuperſtition. And it is very remarkable, that ſometimes, in the *New Teſtament*, eſpecially, when a *ſummary* of religion is given, *nothing more* is *diſtinctly* mentioned, beſides the right government of the paſſions, and relative and ſocial duties——'Becauſe, mankind, in all ages, have been more *defective* in *theſe* duties, than in *outward offices* of piety and devotion; and becauſe, it is almoſt always ſome *ſenſual*, or *ſordid*, inclination, that is *the cauſe* of *irreverence* to almighty GOD: So that, if men entirely droped all *proſpects* of *unrighteous* gain, all *unwarantable* purſuits, *injurious* to others, and reſtrained all *exceſſes* of appetite, they would naturally *love*, and *eſteem*, a being

a being infinitely glorious and amiable, and could ſcarce have a *temptation* to the contrary. For the duties of piety are neither ſo *difficult*, nor ſo *expenſive*, where there is no *baſe intereſt* to purſue, or *paſſion* to gratify, as the regular *government* of *ourſelves*, and a ſtrict inflexible courſe of *equity*, and *goodneſs*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of Self-love, *and its* exceſſes: *Or*, Selfiſhneſs, *and* Benevolence *compared.*

SELF-LOVE, it muſt be allowed, is, in the *general* conſideration of it, not only *lawful*, but *inſeparable* from human nature. It is an *univerſal* principle; not a mere inſtinct of *ſenſe*, but a dictate of *reaſon*. We cannot help approving it as *right* and *fit*, nor wiſh to be deprived of it; but, the more we think and argue about it, ſhall find ourſelves the more ſtrongly preſſed to *cheriſh* and *improve* it. For there never *was*, and never *can be*, a man, who has not loſt the *underſtanding* and *paſſions* of a man, but muſt *ardently deſire* his own happineſs, and have a *ſtrong averſion* to pain and miſery. 'To attempt, therefore, by any rules of *philoſophy*, or any ſcheme of *religion*, to *ſuppreſs* it altogether, is, in truth, to attempt, not to *refine* but to *deſtroy* human nature.'

BUT it is wiſely ordered, by the great author of our being, that *every paſſion*, which he has placed in us, may not only be of ſignal *uſe*, if its natural deſign and tendency be regularly purſued; but is capable alſo, by being *perverted*, of cauſing much *vexation* and *miſery* to ourſelves, and *injury* to others: For this is a demonſtration founded in nature, and obvious to all capacities, of the neceſſity of *ſelf-government*; and that we ſhould take

take the utmoſt care, to keep all our affections and appetites within thoſe *bounds*, which the *Creator* has preſcribed, This appears in nothing more plainly, than in the paſſion of *ſelf-love*. For whatever *beneficial* purpoſes, it was *originally* deſigned to ſerve, by the wiſe and gracious former of human nature, nothing is more generally *abuſed*; and the *irregularities* of it are, ſometimes, vaſtly great, and occaſion the utmoſt confuſion: 'As, indeed, the moſt fatal *diſorders* and *evils*, in human life, ſpring, for the moſt part, from the *exceſſes* of paſſions that are *natural*; and are frequently (though they go by diſtinct names) but *branches* of this *univerſal principle* of *ſelf-love*, which operates ſo neceſſarily, and powerfully, in all mankind.'

And, First, 'we are criminal in a high degree, when *private intereſt* is the *ſole ſpring*, and *end*, of our actions, and the *point*, in which all our views terminate.' It muſt be evident, upon the leaſt reflexion, 'that the *love* of the *public*, is an *original* principle in mankind, as well as *ſelf-love* and that thoſe *affections*, which ſtrongly excite us to ſeek the good of others, and promote the univerſal happineſs, are as *eſſential* a part of our frame, as *that* which directs to ſelf-preſervation, and the purſuit of private good.' To ſuppreſs, therefore, and exterpate thoſe generous diſpoſitions, and act only from narrow and ſelfiſh motives, muſt be extremely *unnatural*, and form a very *baſe* and *worthleſs* character. Could we ſuppoſe any rational being to be ſo made *at firſt*, and to have no views beyond its own advantage, no ſentiments of friendſhip, and public-ſpiritedneſs, we ſhould immediately conclude, that it was very *imperfectly* formed, of very little *ſignificancy* and *uſe* in the creation; and there could be none of thoſe marks of the *wiſdom* and *goodneſs* of the creator, which

which appear, ſo glorioufly, in the *preſent compoſition* of human nature.

Must I not then debaſe and diſhonour myſelf, if I act only from *ſelfiſh* conſiderations? Nay, am I not *much more* infamous, than I could be, if I was originally formed, only with ſuch low and contracted affections? If the latter was my caſe, it would be my *misfortune*, a defect that might be *lamented* indeed, but for which, I ſhould not be at all *anſwerable*. But if I wilfully *efface* the ſentiments of diſintereſted goodneſs and compaſſion, which the all-wiſe creator has ſo ſtrongly *impreſſed* on my nature, I make myſelf a *monſter*; and, conſequently, muſt bear all the guilt and reproach of it. If the inclinations, which I find in my ſoul, to advance the *good* of *mankind*, are not to be improved and ſtrengthned, *what end* can they ſerve? Is not my very nature a *ſtrange*, *unaccountable*, conſtitution, nay a downright *abſurdity*, if I am ſuppoſed to have ſuch *inbred*, powerful, ſentiments as theſe, and neceſſarily to *approve* of them as amiable and excellent, and yet am not obliged to follow their *direction?*

It is a ſelf-evident truth, that mankind were made, to be influenced, by more *worthy* and *ſublime* principles, than a regard to a little, ſordid, private intereſt, that is *inconſiſtent* with, or even *diſtinct* from, the general good: And, therefore, their conduct muſt be extremely irregular, 'when the ſingle point they have in view, is the pleaſure, or advantage that may accrue to *themſelves*; and when, *ſo far* as they go even in the *ſocial* virtues (which, in perſons of ſo degenerate a turn we may reaſonably preſume, will be no very great *length*) when, I ſay, *ſo far* as they go in the practice of *Juſtice*, and performing any *kind*

office

office for their fellow-creatures, inſtead of being determined by the intrinſic *rectitude*, and *amiableneſs*, of ſuch a behaviour, their views are——either to gain *applauſe*; to make themſelves *friends*; to induce the world to place greater *confidence* in them; to recommend themſelves to the *eſteem* of thoſe, from whom they have particular *expectations*; or elſe, under ſpecious pretences of virtue and nobleneſs of mind, to *impoſe*, the more eaſily, on ſuch as are of frank open tempers, void of ſuſpicion, and, thereby, *ſerve* ſome *baſe* deſign.

THIS, perhaps, may look like *aggravating* matters, and *putting caſes*, that never *did*, and it may be thought by ſome, never *will*, happen. Mankind, it may be ſaid, are hardly capable of being ſo wofully *depraved*, or of offering ſuch *violence* to nature, as to root out their *innate*, *ſtrong ſenſe* of benevolence and mercy. And, I am inclined to believe, that this is true, with reſpect to the *generality:* Nay, farther, that *many* perſons, who are, upon the whole, of very *vicious* characters, do things, often, for *juſtice* and *goodneſs* ſake, *abſtracted* from all other conſiderations. But, though the *extravagant* degree of *ſelfiſhneſs* which I am now arguing againſt, cannot but be ſhocking to every mind, that has any remains of virtue and ingenuity, we ſhall, I am perſuaded, find ſeveral things very *like* it, in the courſe of our obſervations upon the world: 'A *few* inſtances, at leaſt (and it is to be wiſhed, for the *honour* of our *nature*, and the *good* of *mankind*, that they were much *fewer* than they are) of *perſons*, who expect *other reward* for doing good, than the glory of the ſervice, and the approbation of their own minds, and who muſt be *brought* to give that *aſſiſtance*, to their fellow-creatures in *diſtreſs*, which the common ties of humanity demand, and to which, they are more directly called, by their particular ſtations and characters: Inſtances, likewiſe, where neither

the *merit*, nor *miſery*, of an object are ſo much regarded, as his *circumſtance* and *rank* in life, and the *capacity* he may be in of *requiting* our good offices; where the *rich* are treated with reſpect, only for their *riches*, and the proſpect we have, from them, of advantage to *ourſelves*; and the *poor* cruelly neglected, merely on account of their *penury*; *i. e.* becauſe, in this latter caſe, we are obliged to exerciſe *pure*, *diſintereſted*, charity——And, finally, too frequent examples of *narrow*, *groveling*, ſpirits, who, in matters of importance and difficulty, make a *gain* of obliging their *friends*; and want to be *hired* even to ſerve their *country*, though it be *a debt*, which every man owes to ſociety.' In all theſe caſes, it is moſt evident, that the *only motive*, or *determination*, to actions, that have the appearance of generoſity and a public ſpirit, is *a regard to private intereſt*.

But again, men may be ſaid to indulge to an *immoderate ſelf-love*, not only, when their own particular advantage is the *ſole* ſpring, and end, of their actions; 'but, when a view to it is, *ſo far*, the *predominant* and *governing* principle, that they refuſe to ſubmit to any *inconveniencies*, for the benefit of the world around them. A man of a *ſelfiſh* diſpoſition, may make no ſcruple of doing a kind office for his neighbour, when it falls in his way *eaſily*, and he can do it without *trouble*, *expence*, or *hazard*; but he is not *intent* on doing good, he does not conſider this as a *principal buſineſs* of his life. His love of himſelf, and conſideration of private intereſt, *reſtrains* and *limits*, if it does not quite *deſtroy*, his benevolence to mankind. He ſeems to think, that he was born, almoſt *wholly*, for *himſelf*, and not deſigned for happineſs in *ſociety*; and, therefore, when he is called to any ſervices, that are inconſiſtent with his *eaſe*, and *pleaſure*, and attended with *difficulty* and *danger*, his *ſelfiſh* prin-

principles always carry him away, in *oppoſition* to the general good. Whereas one of kind ſenſibilities, and diſpoſitions to ſerve the public, *ſeeks* for *opportunities* to be uſeful; is always *ready* and *open* to beneficent deſigns, and actions; and, with a noble reſolution and ſteddineſs of mind, *ſacrifices* private regards, when the *good* of *the world* requires it.

I SHALL only add, 'that the *moſt criminal* degree of *ſelfiſhneſs* is, when we purſue any *private* pleaſures, or advantages, knowing that they directly *interfere* with the *public* welfare, with the natural rights, and liberties, of our *fellow-creatures*.' But this is ſo plain at firſt view, that I need but juſt mention it; and ſhall therefore proceed to expoſe, briefly, the *baſeneſs*, *guilt*, and *fatal conſequences*, of ſuch a narrow temper, and behaviour.

'AND, in general, it muſt be *ſubverſive* of all *ſocial virtue*.' The beſt way of *eſtimating* the reaſonableneſs, and uſefulneſs, of any principles, is to conſider, *what effect*, it would produce, if it prevailed *univerſally*. If the natural conſequence would be, peace and harmony, mutual ſecurity and confidence, and promoting the happineſs of ſociety; we may be aſſured, that is a *right* principle: But if, on the contrary, it would neceſſarily tend to public confuſion and calamity; we may certainly conclude, that it is *vicious* and *unnatural*. Now, if *ſelfiſhneſs* was the *univerſal* principle among mankind, if *every one* was intent on his own *private* advantage, to the neglect of the *general* good, and ſcrupled not to purſue it by any methods, however injurious to *others*, and inconſiſtent with the *common welfare*; it is moſt evident, that there could be no pleaſure, no regularity, no convenience in human life, but the world muſt be a perpetual ſcene of diſorder, and miſery.'

THE greateſt *happineſs* that mankind in common enjoy, plainly ariſes from *ſociety:* But ſocieties muſt of neceſſity be *diſſolved*, if, inſtead of probity, honour, and public ſpirit, a *ſelfiſh* diſpoſition was univerſally indulged; that aimed at a *ſeperate independent* advantage, had *no concern* for the good of the *whole*; and made even juſtice, and all ſocial obligations, ſubſervient to *intereſt*. Nay, if we ſuppoſe, that ſelfiſh men might think it *prudent*, to maintain the general *appearance* of *juſtice*, as the moſt likely way to anſwer *their ends*; yet, if there was nothing of the ſublime principle of *benevolence*, ſocieties, if they could *ſubſiſt*, would infallibly be *miſerable*; and the greateſt part of the *true* ſatisfactions of life, (which ſpring chiefly from *this ſource*) would be abſolutely deſtroyed.

BUT this leads me to obſerve, farther, that 'the *worſt* of *vices* reſult from that vile, and pernicious principle, which I am now oppoſing.' If we conſider our own times, or examine the hiſtories of paſt ages, we ſhall find, that ſome of the greateſt enormities which mankind ever committed, have had their foundation *here*. To begin with *covetouſneſs*——Whence does it ſpring, but from a miſtaken *private intereſt*, and that of the *meaneſt*, and moſt *ſordid*, kind? What is it, that puts men on getting an eſtate by *fraud* and *oppreſſion*, and other methods of *guilt* and *diſhonour*, but *ſelfiſhneſs?* What is it, that makes them *betray* their *friends* for gain, or *ſell* their *country*, enrich themſelves with the *ſpoils* of *widows* and *orphans*, and harden their hearts againſt all impreſſions of *humanity*, but *ſelfiſhneſs*.

AGAIN,

AGAIN, 'from the ſame ſource proceeds *pride*; a vice, that, of all others, renders a man moſt uneaſy to himſelf, moſt diſagreeable to thoſe with whom he converſes, and offenſive in the ſight of GOD. It is an *irregular ſelf-eſteem*, that induces us to value ourſelves *immoderately*, and expect, that the world ſhould treat us with *uncommon* diſtinction and honour; that begets an inſolent *contempt* of mankind; makes us diſreſpectful to our *ſuperiors*; rude and aſſuming, in our carriage, towards our *equals*; and intolerably imperious, arbitrary, and tyrannical, with reſpect to thoſe *below us*. 'And *ſelfiſhneſs* and *pride* again, are the parents of *envy*; and of all that *defamation* and *calumny*, that ſecret *undermining*, *baſeneſs*, and *treachery*, which are the vile arts, commonly uſed, to leſſen the authority and influence of others, and advance *our own*.'

IN like manner, it muſt appear at firſt view, 'that *ſelfiſhneſs* is the general cauſe of *ambition*; one of the moſt unruly paſſions of the mind, and attended with the moſt pernicious effects, It is men's preferring *private* regards, to thoſe which are due to the *public*; and reſolving, to make themſelves *conſiderable*, at all *hazards*; that breeds *faction*, and *diſcontent*, and dangerous *conſpiracies* againſt the ſecurity and peace of government; that has *diſtreſſed*, and *weakned*, the moſt flouriſhing ſocieties; occaſioned infinite *confuſions*; and ſpread *deſolateneſs* and *ruin* through the world. It is the very ſame principle, that occaſions *lying*, breaches of ſolemn *contracts*, *perjury*, and, conſequently, the moſt notorious *violations* of the natural rights of men; that deſtroys *generoſity* to friends, *gratitude* to benefactors, *fidelity* to our country, and even the ſtrongeſt ties of *natural affection*. And, finally, it makes men purſue an *irregular* private ſatisfaction, and indulge them-

themselves in *sensual* excesses, not only to the neglect of their own *true* and *solid* happiness; but, also, in defiance of almighty God, and the sacred and unalterable obligations of virtue, and religion. 'And since *selfishness* is the direct spring of all *these vices*, which turn the moral creation of God quite *upside down*, and destroy all its *order*, and *beauty*; no *more dreadful* misfortune can befall the world, no *surer sign* of its *approaching* misery and ruin, than to have it *universally prevail*.'

But, wouldest thou appear in the highest *amiableness*, and *dignity*, of a reasonable being? Wouldest thou *refine* thy nature to a *God-like* lustre? Wouldest thou *partake*, as far as the imperfection of thy frame will allow, of the *highest happiness* of him, who is all-perfect? Imitate his *goodness*; his *universal*, *invariable*, goodness. The highest stations, of *worldly* dignity, cannot derive such *exalted honour* to their possessors: And the *happiness*, arising from hence, is so worthy our noblest powers, that it will *suffer* greatly by *a comparison* with the pleasures of the *epicure*, the pleasures that result from worldly *power* and grandeur, or any other, the most admired and applauded *sensual* gratifications. For the latter are, *most* of them, mere brutal enjoyments, and *all* empty, superficial, and transitory; and attended with uneasy and bitter reflections: Whereas the pleasures of *benevolence* are truly sublime; at the same time that they *refresh*, they also *enlarge* and *strengthen*, the mind; and, the oftener they are *repeated*, the more effectually will they fix in it, *great* and *noble* sentiments. They are pleasures that will bear *a review*, and improve upon being *examined*: And, the more a man *abounds* in them, the more solid satisfaction will he enjoy in the *present* world; and have the more comfortable prospect, with respect to his *future* existence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of particular branches *of* Benevolence: *In two* SECTIONS.

SECT. I.

Of Mercy, *in its ſeveral parts: But chiefly, of* Compaſſion *towards the* indigent *and* diſtreſſed; *and of a* placable, propitious, *diſpoſition, and the* forgiveneſs *of* injuries.

HAVING, thus, largely conſidered the native excellence, and lovelineſs, of *benevolence* in *general*, and, eſpecially, as it ſtands oppoſed to the extreme of *ſelfiſhneſs*; I proceed to treat more particularly, of *mercy*, one of the moſt important branches of it: Which neceſſarily ſuppoſes *a ſtate*, liable to many *imperfections* and *calamities*; and, as this is the moſt *true* and *exact* deſcription of human life, muſt be a virtue of the *higheſt*, and moſt *indiſpenſable* obligation. And, here, I ſhall mention briefly a few things, that are proper to be remarked, in order to our forming a clear and full idea of it.

IN the FIRST place, then, 'it is not, *merely*, the ſtrong and forcible *inſtinct* of *compaſſion*, which is planted in the temper of man:'

man:' For where nature does *all*, virtue can have *no praiſe*. It muſt therefore, upon reflection, be approved of, cheriſhed, cultivated, in order to its being a *moral*, and *meritorious*, diſpoſition.

AGAIN, '*mercy* is not a *wild*, and *indiſcriminate*, but a *wiſe*, and *well-regulated*, principle.' It *diſtinguiſhes* between objects, as a dictate of *reaſon*; and is not impelled and urged on, in its operations, by mere biaſſes and bent of nature. For many inſtances, of *private* tenderneſs and compaſſion, may be hurtful to the *whole*: And things merely *mechanical*, however excellent, are the *good fortune* of our conſtitution only; but, when wrought into a *ſerious* and *deliberate* habit, they then become a *grace* and an *honour* to it. All virtues are to be aſcribed to, and denominated from, *the principles*, from whence they proceed. 'If mercy ſprings from oſtentation, it is an act of *pride*, and not of moral goodneſs; if from a deſire of *popularity*, it is an act of *vanity*; if from a principle of *private advantage*, and *gain* of any kind, it is debaſed into an act of *ſelfiſhneſs*.'

I WOULD only add here (to prevent any anxious *doubts* and *ſcruples* that may ariſe, from any part of what has now been ſaid) 'that the *intentions* of the ſoul, if there be no fault, no corrupt and wicked biaſs, in the choice of *occaſions* and *objects*, will, doubtleſs, be conſidered by GOD, as *real* exerciſes, and exertions, of *mercy*.' For, elſe, the *beſt*, the moſt *kind* and *ſympathizing*, may meet with very near as *ſevere meaſure* in judgment, as the *hardened* and *relentleſs*: The one, for *miſtaken*, and *miſguided*, *good purpoſes*, as the other, for a *profligate contempt* of all the dictates of nature, and piety.

FINALLY,

FINALLY, and to put an end to these previous remarks, 'our *mercy*, if it be a *right*, must also be a *religious*, temper.' It must regard GOD as the *author* of the dictates of humanity and compassion; and must practise mercy, as one of his reasonable and equitable *laws*. Now, then, it may naturally be asked, what is the strict and proper nature of *mercy*, and what are the chief instances, in which it is to be expressed? I answer, that all the offices of it may be reduced to one, or other, of the following heads.

FIRST, '*Indulgence* to the infirmities, and errors, of our brethren; in opposition to *harshness*, and *severity*;——from a *benignity* and *softness* of spirit; from a *reflection*, and *experience* in itself, that human nature is very *liable* to *err*; and that *severity*, for incidental frailties and imperfections, if it were *mutual* and *universal* (as it ought to be, or not to be exercised at all) must put mankind upon eternally harassing, and tormenting, one another.

SECONDLY, 'Proportioning the *services* we expect from them, to their *capacity*, and *strength*; in opposition to *rigour* and *oppression*.' The contrary to this is a defect of *Justice*; and, consequently, of *mercy*: For justice is the *lowest* virtue, in human, *social* life.

THIRDLY, '*Mercy* includes in it, *gentleness*, and *moderation*; in opposition to *stiffness*, and *inflexibility*.' This is, in a manner, self evident; because an *unyielding* and *unbending* spirit, in societies of *mixed* composition, of *various* humours, and *general* defects, is, in itself, uncongruous and unnatural.

ANOTHER neceſſary branch of *mercy* is, '*compaſſion* towards the *miſerable*, of *all* ſorts and degrees; eſpecially, towards the *poor* and *indigent*, in oppoſition to a *cruel*, and *inſenſible* temper.' Upon the very ſame principles, from whence, true goodneſs *rejoices, with them that do rejoice*, it alſo *weepeth, with them that weep* * : Having this remarkable *diſtinction*, from the *ſordid* and ſelf-centered ſpirit, that not *its own* diſappointments and calamities alone, but *all* the *real* miſeries of *mankind*, are the moving objects of its *commiſeration*.

IN the LAST place, '*true mercy* comprehends in it, a *ſoft, relenting*, and *propitious* diſpoſition, towards thoſe who at any time *offend*; in oppoſition to *extremes* of *puniſhing*, and an unnatural *delight* in human miſery.' All theſe particulars are ſufficiently evident, upon being thus briefly propoſed, and delineated: But, upon the two laſt branches of mercy, now ſpecified, I intend to enlarge more minutely.

AND, FIRST, 'as to *compaſſion*, towards the *diſtreſſed* and *indigent*.'——This, we muſt be convinced, is a neceſſary branch of benevolence, and the want of it an heinous and aggravated crime, by conſulting only the *common ties* of *humanity*. Here, *nature*, and *experience*, joining together, force men, in ſome degree, to acknowledge and *feel* the truth. With theſe, *reaſon* perfectly concurs. 'For, are the race of men an herd of *individuals only*? No. Can they enjoy the *happineſs*, prepared for human nature, each *alone*, and *diſtinct* from all the reſt? This is impoſſible. What are they then, ſince perfection and happi-

* Rom. xii. 15.

neſs,

neſs cannot be attained, by the *ſeperate* powers and endeavours of each individual, contriving and acting *only* for *himſelf*? A *community*, no doubt. But can there be a *community*, without a *general* concern and intereſt, without a *reciprocal*, and *mutual* obligation?'

ADD to this, that this branch of *mercy* is powerfully enforced, by the notion of GOD, 'as the univerſal *parent* of mankind: The *parent* of rich and poor, high and low, men of all ranks and diſtinctions; *equally*, indeed, the parent of all.' For as we are, *all*, the *offspring* of this great and moſt merciful being, and, of neceſſary conſequence, *brethren*; our *obligation* to diſcharge the duty, which I am now recommending, muſt be altogether as plain, as is the *mutual relation*, in which we ſtand to each other: And, conſequently, to be *inſenſible* of the diſtreſſes of thoſe, to whom we are ſo nearly allied, and, much more, to *aggravate* their wants and ſufferings, by oppreſſion and injuſtice, muſt be, to the laſt degree, vile and monſtrous. I ſhall content myſelf with making at preſent, and under this head of argument, but one remark more, and that is; that neglect of the indigent and miſerable, is abuſing the *work* of GOD, and treating it with contempt and indignity, as inſignificant and deſpicable, and utterly unworthy our regard. And what is this, but affronting, and treating with deſpite, the great *Author* of it? Nay behaving, with ſcorn and cruelty, to creatures formed *after the image* of GOD; and bearing as clear and ſtrong *impreſſions* of it, in the extent and compaſs of their rational and moral powers, as, perhaps, we ourſelves can boaſt of. And, therefore, it is very obſervable, that when GOD appointed, by an expreſs command, that *murderers* ſhould be puniſhed with *death*, this reaſon

is assigned for it; because, *in the image of* GOD, *made he man* *. 'Upon the same account, every *lower* injury, every *act* of *insolence* and *oppression*, must be criminal in proportion; and the contrary offices of *mercy* necessary, and indispensable.'

THE same point may be farther argued, 'from the outward *visible*, and *fixed*, constitution of the world.' It is an excellent observation of *Solomon*, that *the rich*, *and poor*, *meet together*; *the* LORD is *the maker of them all* †. The obvious meaning of which is, 'that GOD has ordained the various *mixtures* of *riches* and *poverty*, *affluence* and *distress*, in the present scene of things, to answer very wise and valuable purposes: And among the *great ends*, that may be answered thereby, this is undeniably *one*; *viz.* to *suit* it to *all tempers*, and afford scope, for *every virtue*, to display itself to advantage.' If *all* were in plentiful and flourishing circumstances; there would not be such opportunities for *contentment*, and a patient *submission* to providence, as a low and penurious condition affords. On the contrary, were *all mankind* in a state of poverty; the *benevolent*, and *communicative*, temper would not have sufficient *scope*, to exert itself in, nor, consequently, appear in its proper *dignity* and *lustre*. Such, as were of the most compassionate and generous spirits, could do no more than *lament* (and the more *feelingly*, because they could not *relieve*) the indigence and misery of their fellow-creatures.

WHEREAS by the present *mixed* state of the world, and the *diversity* of ranks and circumstances in it, *all* these *different* virtues may shew themselves, in their utmost strength and perfection: And, therefore, this must appear to every thinking man,

* Gen. ix. 6. † Prov. xxii. 2.

to

to be *one* of the *deſigns* of providence, in appointing ſuch *differences* in human life. 'And he, who, inſtead of being *ſenſible* of the wants of the poor, *hardens* his heart againſt the ſuggeſtions of mercy, and is ſo far from *ſuccouring*, that he *triumphs over*, their miſery, and *ſinks* them down *yet lower*, by an unrighteous *oppreſſion*; as he does not *comply* with the end of providence, in eſtabliſhing ſuch a ſcheme and frame of things, but rather *oppoſes* it: He, I ſay, *reproaches* the *conſtitution itſelf*, as *abſurd* and *irrational*, and, conſequently, reproaches the *wiſdom* of the Creator.'

I SHALL illuſtrate this, by putting it in a ſomewhat different light, in which it will moſt evidently appear, that ſuch cruel *neglecters*, or *oppreſſors*, of the *poor* and *calamitous* part of mankind, throw contempt on the ſovereign *wiſdom* of the maker of the world; and that is, 'for having placed in them ſuch natural *tendencies*, ſuch ſtrong *inſtincts*, and *propenſions*, to tenderneſs and compaſſion.' For, of what *uſe* are theſe kind and merciful *affections*, if it be not our duty to *ſupply* the neceſſitous, and contribute, according to our capacities, *help* and *relief* to the miſerable? Or, what *better* end can they anſwer, than to be a conſtant *uneaſineſs* and *torment* to us; and give us a ſtronger conviction of the *inconſiſtency* of the frame of nature?

IF ſuch melancholy objects are to be *oppreſſed*, inſtead of being ſuccoured (as the conduct of thoſe perſons, who are thus void of mercy, declares that it is their *opinion* they *ſhould be*) 'human nature ſhould have been formed, *only* with ſentiments of *cruelty*; with *none* but *paſſions prompting* to, and delighting in, the *hurt* and *miſery* of others; and without any thing of that *ſoftneſs* (or, as it would then be, *weakneſs*) of diſpoſition, which inclines to *commiſeration*, and oftentimes *interrupts*, and, breaks the

the *force* of, *malevolent* and *injurious* purpoſes:' How wofully are ſuch minds *depraved*, whoſe reaſon is thus darkened and defaced, and who ſo notoriouſly reproach, not barely the *wiſdom*, but the *goodneſs*, of GOD; by ſuppoſing, in effect, that it would ever be poſſible for him, to abandon the *care* of one *conſiderable part* of his creation; and leave the *poor*, to *periſh* in their miſeries, without making any *proviſion* for their relief or comfort. Nothing can be more diſhonourable to the bleſſed GOD, (whoſe chief *glory* is, his unbounded and unchangeable *goodneſs*) than to ſuppoſe, that he allows the *rich* to riot in *inſolence* and *luxury*, without any *emotions* of benevolence and compaſſion; or, that he has deſigned, that *ſome* of his creatures ſhould be *deſpiſed*, and *neglected*, by *others*, and *cruſhed* by their inhumanity, and tyranny. This is a manifeſt contradiction to *his will*, ſo clearly and ſtrongly ſignified, in the whole ordination and frame of nature: Nor, is it poſſible, upon this plan of conduct, that we can entertain *juſt* and *worthy* notions of him; becauſe *theſe* would neceſſarily lead to an *eſteem*, and *imitation*, of his moral character, not only as our indiſpenſable duty, but as our higheſt ornament and glory.

I SHALL only add, 'that the *deeper* the diſtreſs of our fellow-creatures is, the more *praiſe-worthy* and *illuſtrious* is the mercy. The ſtronger the *prejudice* is, againſt the exerciſe of it, the more glorious is its *triumph* and *victory*.' A *Jew*, of an adverſe and hoſtile nation (to take one, of our bleſſed Saviour's own images) relieved by a *Samaritan*; a *Pagan*, by a *Chriſtian*; a *Chriſtian* by a *Mahometan*; where there are ſtrong, though very *abſurd* and *unnatural*, prepoſſeſſions, againſt mutual intercourſes of humanity: Acts like theſe, I ſay, conſtitute the *heroiſm* of friendlineſs, and compaſſion; and ſhew, that we are really *partakers*

of

of a divine nature *. And, finally, to have a *peculiar ſympathy* with thoſe objects of diſtreſs, which the world, *generally*, *abandons*, ſhews (in all inſtances, at leaſt, where their miſeries are *accidental* and *undeſerved*) both the *diſcretion*, and the ſingular *merit*, of our charity.

BUT, I proceed to the other branch of *mercy*, which I reſerved, for a more particular and diſtinct conſideration, and that is; 'a *ſoft*, *relenting*, *propitious*, diſpoſition, in oppoſition to *extremes* of *puniſhing*, and an unnatural *delight* in human *miſery*.'

THIS is repreſented, by *Chriſt* himſelf, under one of the ſtrongeſt phraſes that could poſſibly be uſed, to eradicate utterly, all *evil* and *revengeful* diſpoſitions, out of the hearts of men, *viz.* the *love* of *enemies*; and it was intended to denote, not a mere duty of *inſtituted* religion, but an immutable part of *ſocial morality*. And yet, notwithſtanding this excellent deſign of the author of our religion, the expreſſion itſelf has through weakneſs, and for want of underſtanding the *true meaning* of it, and the *nature* of the *ſubject*, been objected to, as too *general*, *looſe*, and *inaccurate*.——But ſurely, it can never be imagined, by any reaſonable unprejudiced mind, that it was deſigned to recommend an *inward eſteem* of the malicious ſlanderer, the oppreſſor, and cruel perſecutor, or a *complacency*, in perſons of ſuch vile characters; 'but only, the having *kind* and *benevolent diſpoſitions* towards them, and a ſincere *deſire* of their *happineſs*.'

* 2 Pet. i. 4.

AND,

And, indeed, it happens in fact, that, in almoſt all *moral writings*, whether ancient or modern, '*love* moſt commonly *ſignifies*, what it *does* in this *precept* of our holy religion, *viz. benevolence*, or *good-will*; and may be *exerciſed* towards *particular objects*, not only, where there *can be no* eſteem, or complacency, but even, when we are obliged to *puniſh* them.' Thus, it is always allowed, that a *parent* may *love* a wicked and vicious child, though he has the greateſt *abhorrence* of his crimes; and to this it is imputed, that he has ſuch a ſtrong *concern* for his well-fare, and ardent *deſire* of his *reformation*. Nay, even moderate ſeverity, and a juſt puniſhment of his faults, are not only ſuppoſed to be *conſiſtent* with *love*, but to *ſpring directly* from it.

However, the true meaning of our duty will, perhaps, appear more plainly, by conſidering the repreſentations which are made of it in other paſſages of the New Teſtament. It is, therein, deſcribed——by forgiving our brother, who hath treſpaſſed againſt us; by not *rendering evil, for evil, or railing, for railing* *; and, finally, *by not being overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good* †: *i. e.* taking care, that *good-natured* and *generous* ſentiments have the aſcendent in us, and be not controuled, or extirpated, by *angry* and *malicious* paſſions; and being always *diſpoſed*, to perform offices of *humanity*, and *goodneſs*, to an *enemy*, in order, if poſſible, by ſuch a kind and engaging behaviour, to *conquer* his animoſity, and *conciliate* his affection and eſteem.

* 1 Pet. iii. 9. † Rom. xii. 21.

Are

ARE we, then, to ſit down *tamely* under affronts, and ſhew no *reſentment* of them? Muſt we patiently *bear* all the *indignities*, that are offered us, and not endeavour to *repel*, though it be to *his loſs*, the *unjuſt aſſaults* of an enemy? Is it not *lawful* for us, to *force* him, by all proper methods, to *repair* the wrongs he has done us; and to *diſarm* him from doing us any further miſchief? 'Without doubt it is: For *ſelf-preſervation* is a dictate of the law of nature.' Every man has an unqueſtionable *right*, to *guard* his *perſon*, *property*, *reputation*, againſt all unreaſonable attacks; and to *defend* them to the *utmoſt*, provided he does it by *juſt* and *honourable* methods: And '*Chriſtianity* makes *no alteration* in the *natural* rights of mankind.' It no where forbids neceſſary *ſelf-defence*, or ſeeking a *legal redreſs* of injuries,——in caſes, where it may be *expedient* to reſtrain violence and outrage, to maintain private right, and property; and ſecure, to the honeſt and peaceable, the advantages of civil life: But all the explanations which it gives, of the duty of *forgiving injuries* are perfectly *conſiſtent* with this.

FOR the ſubſtance, of what it recommends and inculcates on this head, relates, chiefly, 'to the *temper* of the *mind*, *viz.* that we be *ready* to *paſs by* ſmall affronts, and not *forward* to *execute* private revenge; that we be *diſpoſed* to put the moſt *candid* interpretation, on the deſigns and actions of thoſe, who have injured us, and to make all favourable allowances, that the nature of the caſe will admit; and that, while we ſuffer the greateſt *wrongs*, we maintain a *general benevolence* or *good-will* to our enemies, a ſincere *deſire* of their welfare upon *the whole*, and a conſtant *inclination* upon all *proper* occaſions to

promote it.——This, I ſay, is the notion of *forgiving injuries*, as it is ſtated, and explained, by the Chriſtian religion.

'THE Goſpel, therefore, propoſes the *example* of GOD, in his *condeſcenſion* towards ſinful men, as the general *rule* and *meaſure*, of that *lenity* and *forbearance*, which *they* ought to exerciſe towards each other.' Now the utmoſt, that can be inferred from hence, is, that if our *offending* brother is ſo ingenuous, as to *acknowledge* his offence, and by making all the *reparation* that is in his power, gives us ſufficient reaſon, to think his *repentance* ſincere; we are bound, again, to receive him into our *friendſhip*, and never *upbraid* him with paſt faults, but to be *as heartily*, and *entirely*, *reconciled* to him, as if he had never given us any *juſt ground* of *offence*; as we expect, that GOD, upon our unfeigned repentance and reformation, will receive us into *full favour*, and remember our iniquities no more: And that in other caſes, after the *example* of the ſame moſt merciful and compaſſionate being, we *incline* rather to *gentle* methods, than to *demand* a haſty and rigorous *ſatisfaction*, for every affront that is offered us; nay, that we, *ſtill* preſerve *benevolent* affections, towards an enemy, though he be *unrelenting* and *inflexible*: There is *nothing* in all this (which every one, who has examined particular paſſages, muſt ſee to be the *doctrine* of the *Chriſtian* revelation) that, in the leaſt, *diſallows* of that ſelf-defence, which reaſon, and the laws of our country, direct to.

NAY, it is far from being *a paradox*, 'that a man may *forgive* an injury, at the ſame time, that he *ſeeks* a *legal redreſs* of it'. For he is to be conſidered, both as a perſon, who has received a *private wrong*; and as a member of *ſociety*; which ſuſtains, likewiſe, *ſome damage*, by the injuſtice and violence, which every

every one of its *members* ſuffers. Now it is moſt evident, that he has *no right* to *forgive* the injury, ſo far as the general intereſts of *ſociety* are concerned; and, therefore, muſt be obliged, when it is neceſſary to do *juſtice* to *the public*, to *proſecute* the offender. But, he may be ſaid to forgive the wrong, ſo far as it is *perſonal*, and relates to *himſelf* as the *immediate* ſufferer, if (according to what the *Goſpel* teaches) inſtead of indulging rancour and malice, and forming miſchievous deſigns, againſt one who has injured him, he is ready to do him any *private* ſervices, that are not *inconſiſtent* with neceſſary *ſelf-defence*, and the general happineſs.

Whereas, if he *induſtriouſly*, and *unneceſſarily*, blackens his reputation, and makes it *his buſineſs* to ſpread diſadvantageous ſtories of him, and diſtreſs him in his affairs; if he *ſeeks* for occaſions to *return* him ill offices, and ſticks, neither at treachery, nor open violence, to accompliſh his deſign; *ſuch* a *retaliation* of injuries is criminal revenge: Becauſe, in theſe caſes, the evil intended can anſwer *no other* end, than to gratify a *malicious* mind; it proceeds not, from *reaſon*, but from *irritated* and *ungoverned paſſions*; and can be executed *only*, for the ſake of *doing evil*, and the *unnatural pleaſure*, which he takes in the *miſery* of a fellow-creature.

It is certainly our duty, though we may have a juſt reſentment of the injuries, which an enemy has done us, not to forget that he is *a man*; who partakes of the ſame nature, and has the ſame paſſions and infirmities, with ourſelves, and who, as we are, is formed after the image of God. And this thought will not only reſtrain us, from actually *doing* him a miſchief, but from *wiſhing* his hurt; from *rejoycing* in his infelicity, as well as from being *inſtrumental* in *procuring* it. For rancour and ma-

lice, lurking in the *heart*, even though it were ſo reſtrained (which, indeed, is ſcarce poſſible) as not to diſcover itſelf in any *outward acts* of inſult, muſt be as *inconſiſtent* with that *forgiveneſs* of enemies, which is made, by *Chriſt*, an indiſpenſable condition of our having our offences, againſt GOD, forgiven —— as the *actual rendering evil, for evil:* Becauſe, GOD principally regards the *temper* and *diſpoſition* of the mind; and *ſuch a temper*, as this, renders us moſt unlike to him, and, of conſequence, the objects of his averſion; and, beſides, is, in the very nature of the thing, deſtructive of our rational perfection and happineſs.

I SHALL only add, that particular care has been taken, by the author of our religion, to preſerve to this noble and generous virtue, which I am now explaining, its *utmoſt ſcope* and *latitude*. For, when *Peter came to him, and ſaid,—— Lord, how oft ſhall my brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive him? Till ſeven times? Jeſus ſaith unto him, I ſay not unto thee, until ſeven times; but until ſeventy times ſeven* *——By which, as I apprehend, he intended, in general, to inſtruct his diſciples, that their charity ſhould not be *narrow* and *confined*, but of moſt *extenſive* influence; or, in the language of St *Paul*, that it ſhould *ſuffer long*, and be *kind* (notwithſtanding repeated affronts and indignities) *hoping all things*, and *enduring all things* †. Suffer me, now, briefly to alledge ſome of the principal *reaſons*, by which, the practice of this duty is *enforced*.

AND, in the FIRST place, 'I would urge the practice, of this branch of benevolence, from the moſt worthy and generous of all motives —— *its own excellence*.' For what can be more *noble*,

* Mat. xviii. 21, 22. † 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 17.

than

than to preſerve a *ſteady inclination* to do good, amidſt the ſtrongeſt *provocations* to the contrary; to *moderate* unruly anger, and *govern* our paſſions in ſuch a manner, as that they ſhall never be injurious, and hurtful, to *ſociety?* I appeal to the *reaſon* of *all* mankind, which is an argument of *truer greatneſs* of mind——to be able to *deſpiſe* affronts, or, at moſt, to *reſent* them only *ſo far*, as ſelf-preſervation, and the order of the world, require——Or, to ſuffer ourſelves to be ſo *irritated* and *inflamed* by them, as to loſe our *reaſon*, and that *tenderneſs* of diſpoſition, which is ſo ſuitable to our nature, that it is juſtly ſtiled *humanity itſelf*, in ſentiments of rage and cruelty? To *leſſen* the *ſum* of *human miſery*, by our meekneſs and forbearance; or, to *aggravate* it, by a retaliation of injuries, and a furious purſuit of revenge? To *extinguiſh* the *flames* of diſcord, or to *pour oil* upon them? And, in ſhort (which is the ſame thing) to be, like *guardian-angels*, promoters of peace, and miniſters of public good; or inſtruments of confuſion and miſery?

Solomon, who had carefully ſtudied, wherein true wiſdom, and the perfection of human nature, conſiſt, very juſtly obſerved, that *the diſcretion of a man deferreth his anger*; *and* it is *his glory to paſs over a tranſgreſſion* *. 'For if we follow the wild and unruly motions of *revenge*, it will have a tendency to draw on *freſh* inſult, and provoke *ſtronger* and more *heightned* animoſity, on all ſides.' Such a conduct, therefore, as it *increaſes* the violence and injury to *ſociety*, inſtead of *putting a ſtop* to it, muſt, of conſequence, be irrational. And, certainly, 'it is the *perfection* of goodneſs, to be *uniform*, and *conſtant* to itſelf, to be *free* and *uninterrupted* in its exerciſe, amidſt the greateſt *temp-*

* Prov. xix. 11.

tations

tations to malice and ill-nature; becauſe, this ſhews, that it will ſtand the *teſt*, and is quite pure and genuine.' Whereas, a *diſpoſition* to do good, that is *checked* and *reſtrained*, by every little affront, whether real, or imaginary; and, conſequently, inſtead of ſtanding on a *ſolid* and *conſiſtent* foundation, is at the mercy of ten thouſand *accidents*; and is, not only, not *ſtrong* enough, to *determine* the mind, in oppoſition to the bent of *its own* paſſions, but *depends* on the follies, paſſions, and humours of *others*; ſo *precarious* a goodneſs as this, I ſay, can be but a *low* attainment.

So that it appears, upon the whole, that a readineſs to forgive injuries, the love of enemies, and an inclination, on all proper occaſions, to return good for evil, are certain *evidences* of a *great* mind. 'Theſe are, indeed, *exalted* virtues, that men, of *narrow ſordid* tempers, *cannot* practice.' Such may *love thoſe*, that *love them*; they may have a *ſenſe* of benefits received, and *gratitude*, or *intereſt*, may oblige them to *ſome return* of good offices: But to deſire the *happineſs* of thoſe, who are bent on our *diſgrace*; to *compaſſionate* their diſtreſſes, who *ſeek* our hurt, and *rejoice* in any evils that befal us; to treat them, with *candour*, and *humanity*, though they purſue us, with unreaſonable *reproaches* and *injuries*; and to be *helpful* and *beneficial* to ſuch, who have not only never *obliged* us, nor conſequently, in ſtrictneſs, *deſerved* any thing from us, but who, we have the utmoſt reaſon to believe, will not have the *gratitude*, or *honour*, to *requite* our ſervices; this is the *nobleſt* diſpoſition of human nature, and ſhews it in its *higheſt dignity*: This is charity improved to its *utmoſt pitch*; becauſe it is free from all *mean* or *ſelfiſh* views, and exerciſed only *for the ſake of doing good.*

This

THIS argument is urged, with admirable ſtrength and beauty, by our bleſſed ſaviour himſelf, in the following paſſage: *For if ye love them, that love you, what thank have ye?* [*i. e.* what *extraordinary virtue*, or *merit*, is there, in ſuch an action as this, which is *natural* to the *worſt* of men?] *For ſinners alſo love thoſe that love them. And if ye do good to them, who do good to you, what thank have ye? For ſinners, alſo, do even the ſame. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? For ſinners, alſo, lend to ſinners,* to *receive as much again. But* [if ye would exerciſe a charity, that is truly *noble* and *generous*] *love your enemies, and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward ſhall be great, and ye ſhall be the children of the higheſt: For, he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil. Be ye, therefore, merciful, as your Father, alſo, is merciful* *.

INDEED, the world, has been ſo miſerably *deluded*, as to make *revenge* a point of honour, and to tax the generous virtue of *meekneſs*, with cowardice, and unmanly baſeneſs of ſpirit——As if a man could not be *truly great*, without being *a fury*; and erecting the *monuments* and *trophies* of his greatneſs, by blind *rage* and *paſſion*, and upon the *ruins* of gentleneſs, and moderation of ſpirit: And as if a *proper reſentment* of injuries, ſo far as is neceſſary for ſelf-defence, and to preſerve the peace and order of *ſociety*, was not *conſiſtent* with *theſe duties* of the *Chriſtian* religion. Whereas, in truth, *revenge*, and not meekneſs and forbearance, is the *weakneſs* and *imperfection* of human nature; is deſtructive of all *worthy* and *exalted* qualities; and has its foundation in *cowardice*, or *cruelty*.' For it certainly, argues a want of

* Luke vi. 32, 33, 34, 35, 36.

juſt

juſt reflection, and *calm greatneſs* of mind, to endeavour to *get rid* of an *enemy*, by *any methods*, that *reaſon*, and *religion*, do not warrant. And, when men proceed *farther*, in their *reſentments*, than their own ſecurity, in conjunction with the general good, requires, all the injuries, which they do him, muſt be for the *pleaſure* they take in his miſery; and, conſequently, muſt proceed from a *ſavage* diſpoſition, which delights in *miſchief* for *miſchief's ſake:* Than which, it is impoſſible to conceive of a more *corrupted*, and *profligate*, ſtate of human nature.

BESIDES, *true greatneſs* of mind *conſiſts*, in keeping all our paſſions, and reſentments, under a *juſt command*, *i.e.* in a *due ſubordination* to the good of ſociety, and the general happineſs of our fellow-creatures. This is *the end* of all *wiſe* puniſhments, divine, or human; and, not *merely*, the inflicting *evil* and *miſery* on the offender. But this plain, and moſt excellent, *rule* of *wiſdom*, and *mercy*, a ſtrict *retaliation* of injuries evidently *oppoſes*. So that, upon the whole, we have reaſon to conclude, that it has been *juſtly* eſteemed one *chief* excellence, of the *Chriſtian* religion, to have inculcated a benevolence ſo *large* and *diffuſive*; as not only takes, within its compaſs, our friends, and benefactors; or ſuch indifferent perſons, who have never offended or injured us; but extends even to *enemies*; in imitation of the *univerſal goodneſs* of the Creator, and Father of mankind.

BUT, beſides the *baſeneſs* of revenge in itſelf, *Chriſtianity* has propoſed two other motives, which I cannot wholly omit, becauſe they are, perhaps, better adapted, to ſtrike the generality of mankind. We are, therefore, taught *not* to *avenge* ourſelves; becauſe *vengeance* belongeth unto GOD *. The *general*

* Rom. xii. 19.

ſenſe

ſenſe of which paſſage is this, 'that the great governour of the world, when he calls all mankind to an account, will *vindicate* our *integrity* from the unjuſt aſperſions, that have been caſt upon it, *redreſs* all our grievances, and amply *reward* our patience and meekneſs under *indignities* and *wrongs*; and, at the ſame time, will *cloath* all our malicious *ſlanderers*, and inplacable *enemies*, with *ſhame*. He will, then, effectually *decide* all the *controverſies*, that lie between us. And ſince he is the *ſupreme* judge of the world, who, *alone*, is able *to render to every one according to his deeds*; for men, to *execute* their own *private vengeance*, is, in effect, to uſurp his *prerogative*, and thruſt themſelves into his *judgment-ſeat*.' And,

SECONDLY (which is the moſt awful conſideration of all) '*we ourſelves*, ſhall certainly meet with the ſevere and dreadful *fate* of the cruel, and unmerciful; *if* we, *from* our *hearts*, *forgive not*, *every one*, *his brother*, *their treſpaſſes* *. For it is the voice of nature, confirmed and ratified by revelation, that *he ſhall have judgment, without mercy, who hath ſhewed no mercy* †. And, indeed, with what conſiſtency, or ſhadow of juſtice, can ſuch a one hope for the *pardon*, of his *numerous* and *aggravated* offences, committed againſt GOD, who refuſes to *forgive* the *little*, and, comparatively, *trifling*, affronts, which he receives from his *fellow-creatures*? How can ſuch expect the *remiſſion*, of their vaſt debt of *ten thouſand talents*, from the ſupreme lord and judge of the world; who are unwilling to exerciſe *patience* towards their brethren, but, on the contrary, perſecute them with the utmoſt ſternneſs and barbarity, for the ſmall debt of *an hundred pence* ‡? Can a heart, inflamed by *mercileſs* and *inexorable* reſentment, preſume to *pray* to GOD, to avert his vengeance?

* Mat. xviii. 35. † Jam. ii. 13. ‡ Mat. xviii. 24, 28.

Or he, who entirely *ſhutteth up his bowels* of compaſſion, have the *confidence* to *implore divine* favour? And ſince all, who are of this character, muſt expect at laſt to be treated, with the utmoſt *rigour* of *juſtice*; how great will be their *confuſion*; and how neceſſarily muſt they *ſink*, under the *weight* of all their ſins *unpardoned?*'

MOST excellent, as well as ſtrong, and pertinent to the preſent purpoſe, are the words of the ſon of *Syrach*, in the book of *Eccleſiaſticus* (which, though it be ranked among the *apocryphal* writings, contains many moral reflexions, of the greateſt importance and advantage, towards the right conduct of life)—— *Forgive thy neighbour the hurt, he hath done unto thee; ſo ſhall thy ſin, alſo, be forgiven, when thou prayeſt. One man beareth hatred to another; and doth he ſeek pardon of the* LORD? *He ſhoweth no mercy to a man, that is like himſelf; and doth he aſk forgiveneſs of his own ſins?*——*Remember thine end, and let enmity ceaſe: For, he that revengeth ſhall find vengeance from the* LORD; *and he will ſurely keep his ſins in remembrance* *.

AND as it is evident, from the paſſage juſt cited, that the *wiſer* and *better* ſort of *Jews*, for a conſiderable time before the coming of *Chriſt*, had the ſame general notions of the neceſſity of *forgiving injuries*, and of the wickedneſs and guilt of *revenge*, with *thoſe*, which were ſo ſtrongly inculcated, by *his* moſt holy religion: So it is eaſy to prove, that this was, likewiſe, the doctrine of the genuine and undoubted *ſcriptures*, of the *Old Teſtament*. *Solomon*'s evidence has been, before, produced; who expreſsly aſſerts, that it is the *glory* of *a man to paſs over a tranſgreſſion* ‡. *Rejoice*

* Eccluſ. xxviii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

‡ Prov. xix. 11.

not,

not, ſays the ſame writer, *when thine enemy falleth, let not thine heart be glad, when he ſtumbleth; leſt the* LORD *ſee it, and it diſpleaſe him* *: And again, *if thine enemy hunger, give him bread to eat, and if he thirſt, give him water to drink: Say not I will recompence evil*; but *wait on the* LORD, *and he ſhall ſave thee* †. And, to add no more, *Job*, whom the *Jews* acknowledge as an *inſpired* writer, renounces his having ever *rejoiced, at the deſtruction of him that hated* him, *or lifted up* himſelf, *when evil found him*; and ſays, farther, that he *ſuffered not* his *mouth to ſin, by wiſhing a curſe to his ſoul* ‡.

NAY, with reſpect to *Moſes* himſelf (the firſt great *compiler* of the religious, and moral, *inſtitutes* of the *Jewiſh* diſpenſation) the point is equally clear: And in theſe two views——FIRST, that, as a public *community*, they were obliged, by *his law*, to *love*, and practice *kindneſs*, and *mercy* to *all* mankind. Hence we find, that he has directly inculcated, what our Saviour ſtiles *the ſecond great commandment of the law* §, viz. *thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, as thy ſelf* ‖. And, that by the word *neighbour*, was not intended their *brethren* only, who were of the ſame *nation*, and *religion*, with themſelves, appears undeniably from the ſenſe it bears in the tenth commandment; and, particularly, in this clauſe of it, *thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbours wife* **: Otherwiſe, it muſt have been, *only unlawful*, for a *Jew*, to *covet* the *wife* of a *Jew*, but not, the *wife* of a *Gentile*,' But this is rather more clear from the following paſſage—*The ſtranger, that dwelleth with you, ſhall be, unto you, as one born amongſt you, and*

* Prov. xxiv. 17, 18. † Chap. xxv. 21. and xx. 22. ‡ Job xxxi. 29, 30.
§ Mat. xxii. 36. ‖ Levit. xix. 18. ** Exod. xx 17.

thou ſhalt love him as thy ſelf: For ye were ſtrangers in the land of Egypt *. Which reaſon, if it has any thing of weight in it, muſt chiefly denote *ſtrangers*, of a *different religion:* For this was, moſt certainly, the ſtate of the *Iſraelites* in *Egypt*; where they acknowledged not the very *firſt principles*, on which the *Egyptian ſuperſtition* was founded. I ſhall only add, to make the whole of this affair evident, beyond all colour of juſt exception; that,

SECONDLY, the declarations of *Moſes* againſt *private revenge* are equally ſtrong and explicite. For if, ſays he, *thou meet thine enemies ox or his aſs, going aſtray, thou ſhalt ſurely bring it back to him again:* And *if thou ſee the aſs of him that hateth thee, lying under his burthen, forbear* not *to help him* †. In another paſſage, the command is more general: *Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother, in thy heart; thou ſhalt not avenge or bear any grudge, againſt the children of thy people* ‡. From all which it appears, that the wicked and unnatural maxim of the *Scribes*, and *Phariſees*, viz. *thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy* §, was as contrary to the ſentiments of *Moſes*, and the prophets, as it is to the religion of the *Goſpel*; and that, in recommending the divine diſpoſitions of *propitiouſneſs* and *mercy*, the *revelations* of GOD, in all ages, have been conſpiring and harmonious. Nor were the notions, of many of the *old Jews* themſelves, at all conformable to the vile inhuman principles, of thoſe great *corrupters* of *their law*. For *Philo* ſpeaking of the *Jews* of *Alexandria* (in the reign of the emperour *Caligula*, very near the time of *Chriſt*) ſays, that they addreſſed themſelves to GOD, af-

* Levit. xix. 34.
† Exod. xxiv. 3, 4, 5.
‡ Levit. xix. 17, 18.
§ Mat. v. 43.

ter

ter this manner,——'We rejoice not, O LORD, in the misfor-'tunes and calamities of our enemies; being taught, by thy 'holy laws, to be ſtrongly affected, and to yield our ſouls up to 'the impreſſions of mercy.'——A very remarkable and noble example this, and worthy the imitation of *Chriſtians* themſelves!

WHAT now, with reſpect to this important article of ſocial morality, have been the dictates of *Heathen* wiſdom and philoſophy? This will be ſeen, as to ſome of the greateſt characters in the *Gentile* world, by the following extracts from *antient* writers; many of whom lived, long before the time of the *full* promulgation of the *Goſpel*. For inſtance——*Plato* ſays, 'that injuries, 'received, ought not to be returned:' Which is exactly the ſame doctrine with that of St *Paul*, of *not recompencing evil for evil* *. Again, it is related of *Socrates*, the maſter of *Plato*, that when one threatned to kill him wherever he met him; he anſwered with an accent, that, according to the relater, ſeemed, likewiſe, to threaten his angry and reſentful enemy: 'And I alſo, 'will, upon all occaſions, endeavour to make thee my friend.' To the ſame general purpoſe, was the reply of *Zeno*; who, to a perſon that ſaid to him, 'let me periſh, if I am not revenged 'upon thee,' made this generous ſpeech: 'And I alſo, If I do 'not cultivate thy friendſhip, and endeavour to ſubdue thine en-'mity.' How ſtrictly conformable are theſe two examples, likewiſe, to another *Apoſtolical rule*, viz. *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good* †.

OTHER *Heathens* have aſſerted, 'that he is one of the beſt of 'men, who knows, better than others, how to bear injuries ‡;

* Rom. xii. 17. † Ib. ver. 21. ‡ Menand.

'that

'that a man, of a revengeful diſpoſition, is rather worſe than 'the perſon, from whom he has ſuffered wrong †; that to return 'wound for wound, and hurt for hurt, is acting a wild and bru-'tal, and not a humane and manly, part ‡; that to be of a 'vindictive diſpoſition, is the characteriſtic of a wrathful and 'contentious, and not of an ingenuous generous, ſpirit; and 'that to be ridiculed, aſperſed, and treated with violence, is no 'diſgrace to a wiſe man §; but that his real diſhonour ſprings 'from hence——his inſulting, aſperſing, and hurting others.'

FARTHER, it is very remarkable, that *Seneca* has made uſe of the very ſame argument, to reſtrain revenge, and enforce forgiveneſs of injuries, with our bleſſed Saviour *Chriſt* himſelf; *viz.* 'that GOD cauſes his ſun to riſe upon all:' And, again, 'how many are unworthy of the light, and chearful influences, 'of the ſun, and, yet, it ſtill ſhines upon, and invigorates them?' To which let me add another ſaying of his, *viz.* 'that he, who 'revengeth can have nothing elſe to plead, in mitigation of his 'offence, but this; that he ſins more excuſeably' [*i. e.* being *provoked*, thereto, by injuries firſt received.]

LET me add, to theſe, two or three citations more, for the concluſion of the whole. And the *firſt* is, the wiſe obſervation of *Plutarch*—'That it is a high point of humanity, to paſs by injuries, 'without taking revenge on an enemy: And, that if any one, 'over and above this, is moved by his misfortunes, and ſhews 'a mind ready to relieve him, or his children, in any critical exi-'gence of their affairs; whoever is not charmed with ſuch ex-

† Max. Tyr. ‡ Muſon. § Lyſias.

'alted

'alted goodneſs, is a monſter of a black malignant heart, an 'heart of iron, or adamant.' The other paſſages are taken from *Hierocles*, who aſſerts, that, in the diſplays, and degrees, of our friendly benevolence, 'we have a ſure rule to go by, *viz.* 'conſtantly to imitate GOD: Who hateth nothing that he hath 'made, though he ſheweth ſingular favour to the good.' 'Let 'us maintain (ſays the ſame writer) the meaſure and proportion 'of our benevolence, in this order. Love good men in the firſt, 'and higheſt, ſenſe, becauſe, they act up to the perfection of 'their nature; and wicked men, if it be only on account of our 'common humanity, though they have nothing, in their in-'ward diſpoſitions, to recommend them to our kind and friend-'ly wiſhes.'——And by the way, we ſee clearly, from what has now been offered, that when a *late* author, objecting againſt the *Chriſtian* precept of *loving enemies*, and our Lord's own explication of it, inſinuates, that in his opinion, *other* ſchemes of morality (meaning, chiefly at leaſt, the ſchemes of the *philoſophers*) are, in this reſpect, more *excellent* than the *Chriſtian* morals——he ſuppoſes a *competition*, where there is, in the main, no *difference*; and a *preference*, where the doctrines are, upon the whole, *the ſame*. And this is a plain demonſtration, that he has been too inadvertent, and too precipitate, both in his *premiſſes*, and his *concluſion* *.

THUS have I diſcourſed largely concerning *juſtice*, *benevolence*, and *mercy*, in many of their principal branches: And the great uſe, to be made of the whole, is this——That we carefully *cheriſh*, and *cultivate*, theſe excellent and divine virtues. Let us not ſuffer them to be *ſuſpended*, or *weakned*; for want of the ne-

* See Mr. Chubb's farewell &c. Vol. 1. p. 20.

ceſſary

ceſſary means, to give them a firmer eſtabliſhment, and carry them on to a proper degree of ſtrength, and perfection. Let us avoid whatever *tends* to deſtroy, or obſtruct, their *influence*: Either by *clouding*, or corrupting, the natural ſenſe of their immutable *fitneſs*, and *importance*; or by cauſing their dictates, to be more *looſely* and *ſlightly* attended to; but, eſpecially, by introducing, and giving the aſcendent, to the *oppoſite evil* diſpoſitions; which, in all caſes without exception, are the neceſſary *bane* of true goodneſs, both in the conſcience, and in the outward courſe of life. Let us conſider, that through mere *inattention*, and an indeliberate *heedleſsneſs* of temper, men may ſo far *diveſt* themſelves of the principle of mercy, as to have ſcarce *any feeling* of the wants, and diſtreſſes, of their fellow-creatures: They may be ſo unmoved and inſenſible, through an *habitual indolence*, as not to find themſelves prompted, by a ſufficient inward energy, to *relieve* their diſtreſſes; and ſo may be void of *mercy*, and not act the *kind* and *charitable* part in many inſtances, though they have no *direct inclination* to be *cruel*.

Let us conſider, farther, that if we allow ourſelves to neglect but *one plain* act of mercy; this has a natural tendency to harden the heart, more *generally*, againſt the impreſſions of benevolence and humanity: And, in like manner, if we violate any ſingle, and acknowledged, rule of juſtice; we qualify and prepare ourſelves, by this *firſt ſtep*, for the commiſſion of *greater* iniquity. Should it be ſaid, that, what we tranſgreſs is but a punctilio; a *leſſer*, and with reſpect to its conſequences, or in compariſon with others, an *inconſiderable* rule of equity: The anſwer is obvious, that no *good reaſon* can be aſſigned, why we ſhould violate *any* of the laws of equity; and that if we once *begin* ſuch an evil courſe, we have no principle,

of

of ſufficient weight, to ſtop us from *proceeding* farther in it. 'For if we—plead the *neceſſity* that we are under, from *cuſtom*, and the general methods of *trade* and *commerce*'—I would aſk, is *cuſtom* a warrantable rule of life? Is a *contracted private intereſt* a fit ſtandard, by which to regulate our conduct? If *this be ſo*, the boundaries of right and wrong are demoliſhed, the difference of good and evil is confounded, and virtue can have no certain and immutable foundation, in the nature of things.

But, on the contrary, if the boundaries of right and wrong, and the diſtinctions of good and evil, ſubſiſt, and the obligations of virtue remain for ever the ſame, the whole, of this plea, is extremely weak and frivolous. For no man can think himſelf under a *neceſſity*, of *ſtaining* his character by baſe and diſhoneſt *fraud*; if he has not fixed it, as the *governing maxim* of his life—to prefer temporary convenience and eaſe, and the accommodations of the preſent world; to the rectitude of his nature, his duty to almighty God, the pleaſures that attend an uncorrupted probity, and the hope of eternal ſalvation.

Again, let us chooſe *juſtice*, *benevolence*, and *mercy*, for our moſt intimate, conſtant, and delightful *companions*; and ſtudiouſly cultivate, and endeavour to excel in them, whatever our *calling*, *character*, or *ſtation* be: Let us not allow their weight and influence to be, at all, diminiſhed, by any *changes*, that may happen in our *condition*. The practice of theſe virtues is, indeed, peculiarly *becoming* an *high* and *exalted* rank, becauſe they are a diſtinguiſhed characteriſtic of *generous* and *noble* minds; and becauſe thoſe, who are in advanced ſtations, have ſuperior *opportunities*, and *advantages*, for countenancing and ſupporting

juſtice, and exerciſing diffuſive beneficence: And their *example*, if they are of falſe and malignant diſpoſitions, will *corrupt*, and *propagate* falſhood and iniquity among, the *inferior* part of mankind. But ſtill, it is equally plain and undeniable, that righteouſneſs, and a merciful compaſſionate temper, are the ſupports of order and happineſs, in *every condition*. 'So that the *prince*, the *noble*, the *gentleman*, the *merchant*, the *mechanic*, the *ſlave*, are ſubject to *one general*, and *mutual*, obligation.'

REMEMBER therefore, in whatever condition providence may think fit to place thee, that the obligations of juſtice and mercy ſpring from the *eſſential frame* of human nature, as *ſuch*, and not from a *particular ſituation*, and *accidental occurrences*; but are binding upon thee, as long as thou art *a man*, *accountable* to GOD, and bound to *conform* to his *moral* perfections. Purſue not mean pleaſures, to the proſtitution and ſhame of the *innocent*; the diſhonour of *families*; the encouraging ſeminaries of *leudneſs*, and *vice*; and, conſequently, in direct oppoſition to the public good. Let not the love, of *ſordid gain*, prevail with thee to uſe *mean arts*, to the *prejudice* of thy neighbour's rights; and *ſhut up thy bowels of compaſſion*, againſt the diſconſolate, and neceſſitous. And as we are all, ſometimes, *forced* to *converſe with ourſelves*, it muſt highly concern us to eſtabliſh, and improve, ſuch diſpoſitions and habits, as, when we *look inward*, will yield an agreeable and pleaſing *entertainment*. An open, unſuſpicious, and undiſſembled *honeſty*, we ſhall ſurvey with continual *approbation*: Otherwiſe, our *own hearts*, and *real characters*, will be the moſt *ungrateful* objects we can converſe with; and can excite no other paſſions in us, than *ſhame*, and *ſelf-abhorrence*.

ONCE

ONCE more, let us conſider, that juſtice and mercy are, in themſelves, our moſt rich and ſplendid *ornaments*; and vaſtly more honourable marks of diſtinction, than any of the badges, and enſigns, of wordly pomp and power; any of the trifling ſuperficial decorations of wealth, and luxury——Becauſe they are *truly amiable*, and *enobling*, qualities, and conſtitute a *ſubſtantial* beauty, and dignity: They aſſimilate our natures to the nature of GOD, and of all the *wiſeſt*, and *beſt*, beings in the univerſe. And the worthineſs and luſtre, which they confer, is *permanent*, beyond the power of *time*, or *chance*: It will ſurvive the *grave*, and ſhine brighter and brighter to *all eternity*,

LET any man now, with the leaſt ſpark of *ingenuity* in his temper, but make theſe ſentiments, and this train of thinking, *habitual* to his mind, and he will reject with generoſity, and a high diſdain, all *temptations* to fraud, treachery, and cruelty: And find himſelf ſtrongly determined, to preſerve *juſtice inviolable*, and give to *mercy* (I mean, what is rightly ſo called, and not a blind and fond affection) a *free* and *unlimitted* ſcope.

ESPECIALLY, if, in the LAST place, he ſeriouſly conſiders, and impreſſes upon his mind, the *eternal* truth, and fitneſs, of theſe principles——that they are *unchangeable* laws of GOD, laws, not arbitrarily joined, but ſpringing from the moral conſtitution of human nature: That the natural relations, in which mankind ſtand in relation to each other, and their common dependencies, infirmities, and wants, demand the *conſtant* and *univerſal exerciſe* of theſe virtues: And that all judicious and worthy men muſt *applaud*, and GOD himſelf *eſteem*, *reward*, and *honour*, the righteous and merciful; but that men, *like* GOD, muſt

deſpiſe and *abhor*, and the infinite being himſelf *deteſt*, and ſeverely *puniſh*, the oppreſſor, the tyrant, the perſecuter, the traitor; the injurious of every kind, and in every degree; and the hard heart, that is unaffected by the ſorrows, and complaints, of the miſerable ——If, I ſay, any perſon engages *frequently*, and *ſeriouſly*, in ſuch reflexions as theſe, and endeavours to give them their *full force*, and *due efficacy*, upon the conſcience; it will be next to impoſſible, that he ſhould *relinquiſh* the *practice* of ſuch admirable, and moſt beneficial, virtues, for the *contrary* infamous, and moſt deſtructive, vices.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of particular branches *of* univerſal Benevolence.

SECT. II.

Of private friendſhip; and, the love of our country.

I SHALL begin this ſection, with endeavouring to ſettle the true notion of *private friendſhip*, and the *love of our country*; and ſhewing, how far, they are truly *virtuous*, and *honourable*. And this is the more neceſſary, becauſe it is undeniable, that *both* theſe principles have been groſsly *abuſed*. Private friendſhips have been only little parties in vice, and miſchief, and public diſorder; and an attachment, to the intereſt of particular ſocieties, has been a vile conſpiracy againſt juſtice, honour, liberty, and the peace and happineſs of the world. It is neceſſary, therefore, that we fix their proper bounds, that none may be led away, by the mere force of agreeable and bewitching ſounds, ſo as to pervert what, if rightly underſtood, are really *amiable*, and *uſeful*, into *monſtrous*, *unnatural*, and *hurtful*, qualities.

UNIVERSAL benevolence, then, is the *ſupreme law* to all rational beings, the authority of which ought never to be ſuperſeded,

ſeded, limited, or in the leaſt weakened, by any ſelfiſh and partial affections. For if there be any beauty and amiableneſs, at all, in doing good, the more extended our views are, it muſt be ſo much the more meritorious, and honourable; and, conſequently, to aim at the *univerſal* good muſt be the higheſt degree of virtue. Again, the happineſs of the whole ſpecies cannot be *too intenſely* purſued; whereas, all other affections are no longer *innocent*, than while they are, at leaſt, conſiſtent with this; are only *virtues*, ſo far as they directly promote it; but are *baſe* and *deteſtable*, when they interfere with it.

To apply this, First, to the caſe of *private friendſhip*. When my love of a friend is inconſiſtent with the regards, which I owe my Country, and, eſpecially, when it oppoſes the general good of mankind, to whom my ſervices are more ſtrictly and immutably due; it is an *unnatural* affection, and ought to be rooted out of the mind: Becauſe, were it univerſally indulged, it would introduce the utmoſt confuſion, and an entire ſubverſion of all order, and government. No man can ſupport his friend, by interrupting the courſe of juſtice, or violating the rules of honour, who is not an utter ſtranger to virtue; but, on the contrary, it muſt be a *noble* action, agreable to *reaſon*, and every *benevolent* and *ſocial* principle, to deſert him for the public good. And this being the great rule, by which we are to determine, in all caſes, concerning the expediency and fitneſs of private friendſhips; it follows, farther, that they have nothing truly generous in them, but as they tend to cultivate and improve *univerſal benevolence*, and are a natural means, to make the *whole ſpecies* happy.

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For if they are not chosen for this reason, because they are best upon the whole, if they are only not contrary to the public happiness, but have no direct influence to promote it, our views must be mean and selfish; and friendship will become a mere matter of *private convenience*, or, else, of *humour*, and *fancy*; in either of which cases, it must be uncertain and variable, as circumstances, opinions, and interests alter; or, finally, it will be only *the love of ourselves*, i. e. of the resemblance of our own way of thinking, dispositions, and manners, in others; and, consequently, nothing like that sublime and heroic virtue, for which it has been recommended, and which, indeed, it is in itself, so long as it is the *medium* of *universal benevolence.*

Again, all friendship, in order to its being truly rational and praise-worthy, must be founded in *virtue.* For this is the only ground of that esteem and steady confidence, which are inseparable from a worthy and generous friendship. It is in this way alone, that it can be at all useful, or, in any measure, promote the end of every lesser alliance, *viz.* the welfare of the great community of mankind. It is this, that distinguishes true friendship, from the vile cabals of robbers and traitors, men of dark and mischievous designs; who may have all the other characters of it, 'such as a similitude of tempers, passions, interests, secrecy, confidence, constancy, nay a reciprocal tenderness and affection for each other.'

And from hence it follows, that the love of a friend must be, in some degree, proportioned to his *real merit*, otherwise, it is foolish and unreasonable *partiality*; and, that we ought to prefer every man before him, that has really a much more *excellent*

and

and *uſeful* character. In our *eſteem*, we muſt neceſſarily do it, unleſs our private affection has blinded and perverted our judgments; and there are caſes ſuppoſeable, in which, if we would not forfeit the glorious title of being the *friends of mankind*, for a little fantaſtic name of friendſhip, we muſt do it in our *ſervices* too. Suffer me to give an inſtance, in which this is indiſputable. Suppoſe there is an office in the ſtate to be diſpoſed of, of vaſt conſequence to the commonwealth, that requires, to the right diſcharge of it, very great and diſtinguiſhed abilities, and that the competition for it lies, entirely, between my moſt intimate friend, and another, with whom I never cultivated any familiar acquaintance, but have only a general knowledge of; if my friend be unſkilful, and indolent, and I have reaſon to believe, from a thorough experience of his temper, that he will behave ill in it, to the detriment of the public; and the other has a much better judgment, more generoſity, ſteadineſs, command of his paſſions, and is qualified, upon all accounts, for greater uſefulneſs: Can I be long in ſuſpence, which to determine for? Shall I compliment my *friend*, at the expence of my *country*? Such friendſhips, as theſe, are ſo far from being inſtances of virtue, that they would be juſtly branded with infamy: And whoever acted thus could have no real benevolence in him, which can never prefer a leſs good to a greater; nor, conſequently, the advantage and pleaſure of *an individual*, or the gratifying his ſelfiſhneſs and vanity, to the *general* happineſs.

I MAY add, that there is ſomething, in almoſt all accounts of private friendſhip, that is in a great meaſure *mechanical*. A high eſteem of a wiſe, virtuous, and uſeful character, an ardent zeal to ſerve our friends, and faithfulneſs to their intereſts, are what all may attain to; but the fervour and ſtrength of paſſion, which

which ſometimes mixes with it, what we may call the *enthuſiaſm* of friendſhip, depends, very much, on particular conſtitutions. ——It is the more *groſs* part: And though it be highly extolled, and is apt to ſtrike in the relation, and beget the ſtrongeſt prejudices in favour of friendſhip, it is rather by engaging our *affections*, than convincing our judgments.——What is moſt valuable, in it, is the *deliberate* and *rational* part, which is founded on principles of generous and univerſal benevolence.

And as there is a great deal *mechanical*; there are other things, very highly celebrated, which, if they are preſcribed as general rules and laws of friendſhip, are *wild* and *romantic*. For inſtance, it is magnified as a moſt noble and heroic action, for a man to ſacrifice all private intereſt, and even life itſelf, for his friend. I ſhall not diſpute the diſintereſtedneſs and generoſity of it, nor that it may, in ſome caſes, be, upon the whole, very commendable; but there are others, in which, it will be eaſy to ſhew, that it may not only be *raſh* and *imprudent*, but inconſiſtent with *prior* and more *important* obligations.——The circumſtances of a man's *family*, and of others, whoſe happineſs nearly depends upon him——his importance to *the ſociety, of which he is a member*——and uſefulneſs to *the world, in general*—— ought all to be conſidered; and may be very ſtrong arguments, to prevail with him to preſerve himſelf. And if for the ſake of a friend, (who, though poſſeſſed of ſeveral amiable qualities, may be of little conſequence in active and ſocial life) he deprives his children of a kind protector, and guide, or the ſtate of a wiſe experienced counſellor, the chief aſſerter and guardian of its liberties; and, conſequently, over-rules the ſtrongeſt impulſes of *natural affection*, and the regard he owes his *country*, and *mankind*;

kind; his friendſhip is evidently founded on the ruins of reaſon, and humanity.

LET us, therefore, ſeperate the *mechanical* part, and all *extravagant tranſports*, from private friendſhip, and conſider it as a thing, that reaſon may approve and juſtify; and we ſhall find, that it is nothing more, than the *reciprocal eſteem* and *affection* of *virtuous* minds, *united* by a harmony of inclinations, views, and intereſts, all *upright* and *generous*——that it never exceeds, in any inſtance, the rules of *juſtice*, *truth*, and *honour*——that it is always ſubſervient to the great law of *univerſal benevolence*—— and *valuable*, not as it is an attachment to private perſons, but as a means of promoting the cauſe of virtue, and the happineſs of the world.

THE ſame may be ſaid of the *love of our country*, *viz.* that it is a rational and virtuous diſpoſition, not merely, as it is a regard for a *particular part* of the ſpecies; but as it has a tendency to advance the *univerſal good*. To love our country, only becauſe we *were born in it*, without carrying our views to any thing farther, is weak and childiſh; the prejudice of *education*, and *cuſtom*: This is making *mere chance* the ground, and rule, of our affection, and not the dictates of reaſon and virtue. Or are we ſtrongly attached, to the inhabitants of a particular ſpot, only upon this account, our being engaged to defend and ſupport each other? This is *debaſing* a very noble principle, and making it *low* and *ſelfiſh*. In order, therefore, to raiſe it to ſo great and heroic a virtue, as it has been repreſented, we muſt ſeek out ſome other foundation for it: And the true ſtate of the matter, I take to be this.

FOR

FOR their ſecurity againſt injury and violence, and to anſwer, in the moſt effectual manner, the great end of their benevolent and generous affections, mankind found it neceſſary to form *particular ſocieties*. The reaſon, of ſupporting theſe voluntary combinations, is not only *ſelf-defence*; but becauſe ſuch a method is for the *general good*. Theſe two ideas ought never to be ſeparated; becauſe things cannot continue in a regular and natural ſtate, but while the good, of every part, is conſidered as ſubordinate to the good of the whole. Now the good of the whole is, unqueſtionably, beſt promoted, by every perſon's having a hearty affection for the ſociety, to which he belongs, and a ſtrong zeal for its welfare: This is his immediate concern; the ſtation and ſphere of uſefulneſs, that providence has aſſigned him. And to be indifferent about his *country*, nay, indeed, not to cultivate an ardent love of it; but, inſtead of this, to amuſe himſelf with forming idle ſchemes, for the benefit of *foreign* nations, to whom he is no way related, nor perhaps likely to be known, nor, conſequently, to have ſo much influence among them, as to be able to reduce his ſchemes, were they ever ſo beneficial, to practice; all this is very prepoſterous, and extravagant. It is, in effect, reſolving to be uſeleſs, and to neglect the good of mankind altogether.

SINCE then a love of the *public*, *i. e.* of the particular civil community of which we are members, and a generous defence of its laws and liberties, is the only way, that men, in general, have, to contribute their ſhare to the happineſs of the ſpecies; and, if univerſally cultivated, a natural means of effecting this noble and moſt deſireable end; we muſt reſolve the merit of it chiefly into this, and enlarge it beyond *narrow contracted*

tracted views, if we would make it a ſublime and heroic virtue: The undeniable conſequence of which is, that it is only a rational principle, when it is entirely conſiſtent with, and ſubſervient to, the ſupreme law of univerſal benevolence.——It ought never to propoſe *a diſtinct intereſt*, from that of the whole; becauſe, then, it immediately ceaſes to be an amiable and uſeful quality, and becomes one of the moſt vile and miſchievous: For inſtance, when it prompts any to extend their territories, by unjuſt conqueſts, to oppreſs and plunder weaker ſtates, and ſpread ſlavery and deſtruction through the world. In all ſuch caſes, when a particular country is a *wicked faction* againſt the rights of all mankind, which, it would be for the general good, to have ſuppreſſed and utterly extirpated; no one, who has any ſenſe of generoſity, can rejoice in its ſucceſs: Love of our country is then a *private* affection, and muſt give way to the *public* one. And though we may be ſo far concerned for its proſperity, as to lament the degeneracy and violence that pevail in it, and even to hazard our lives to remedy its diſorders; we cannot, ſurely, wiſh well to it in any other way, while it is carrying on ſuch pernicious ſchemes; we cannot rejoice in its victories; without declaring ourſelves enemies to juſtice, liberty, and the univerſal happineſs, and, conſequently, being monſters of iniquity and cruelty.

The ſum of the whole is this, that both private friendſhip, and the love of our country, are only ſo far amiable and generous, as they are branches of univerſal benevolence. Nothing can be a virtuous, a great or noble, but what is alſo a uſeful, quality; and it is an infallibly right rule of judging in all caſes of benevolence, which may ſeem to claſh and interfere with each other, to aim at the *greateſt* and *moſt extenſive* good: So that, if there be a real neceſſity, I am to ſacrifice *my friend*, for the ſake

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of *my country*, and my *country* for the general happineſs of *mankind*. Univerſal benevolence, therefore, is infinitely the moſt exalted and heroic ſpring of action, becauſe the univerſal good cannot be purſued to *an exceſs*; but private friendſhip, and the love of our country, may be ſo perverted, as to become miſchievous and deſtructive principles. The former is entirely *diſintereſted*, and can proceed only from the love of goodneſs, and, conſequently, is a moſt *God-like* diſpoſition; the latter may both ſpring from *low* motives, and terminate in a *narrow private* intereſt: The former contains every inſtance of reſtrained and partial affection, that has any thing great and lovely in it, and is, therefore, the *chief ſum* of ſocial virtue; whereas the latter, without more enlarged views, than the mere pleaſure of a friend, or the welfare of our country, forms a character ſo far from being *eminently* good, that it wants *the very eſſentials* of true goodneſs. And this, alone, is ſufficient to vindicate our bleſſed Saviour's ſcheme of benevolence, and give us an high idea of its *excellency*, and *perfection*. I proceed, however, to offer a few things more directly, in anſwer to the objection that has been made againſt it, by a late noble and juſtly celebrated writer, 'from its not particularly recommending private friendſhip, and the love of our 'country *.' And,

First, there is one circumſtance, which has been already hinted, that will go a great way, of itſelf, to remove this ſeeming difficulty; *viz.* that the *Chriſtian* principle, of univerſal benevolence, includes both the others, ſo far as they are founded in *reaſon*, and have any thing *virtuous* and *praiſe-worthy* in them. *Univerſal* benevolence muſt, in the very nature of the thing, comprehend every ſpecies of *real* benevolence; and a command, to promote the general good, neceſſarily implies all the proper

* *Lord* Shaftſbury's *Characteriſticks*.

means

means of doing it; and, conſequently, every inſtance of private friendſhip, and zeal for the welfare of particular communities, that appears to have this natural tendency.

It is no juſt objection againſt moral diſcourſes, that they lay down, chiefly, general rules for the right conduct of life: For theſe alone are *eternal* and *unchangeable* morality. And the true application of them, to particular caſes, muſt be left to every man's own reaſon, becauſe it depends on a variety of circumſtances, which alter the expediency of things. To apply this to the point before us——The great law of benevolence is, to aim at the happineſs of the whole ſpecies. This is a proper rule for all mankind, and obliges perſons of every complexion and character; but the manner, in which it may be done, is, to different men, very different, and, conſequently, muſt be referred, in a great meaſure, to their own judgment and diſcretion. Nor is this likely to create any confuſion; becauſe general principles are eaſily accommodated to particular circumſtances, where there is an honeſt mind, and a ſmall degree of reflection: For every one, that thinks, muſt immediately ſee, that nothing can be an act of real benevolence, which oppoſes the univerſal good; and will ſoon diſcern, in what caſes, private friendſhip, and the love of our country, are fit means to advance it.

Let me obſerve farther (though the *noble* Author, abovementioned, ſeems to think it *a ſtrange* ſuppoſition) that private friendſhip is not a matter of *ſtrict* and *indiſpenſable* duty upon all; but, for the moſt part, a *purely voluntary* engagement. General benevolence is a fixed, immutable, and univerſal duty. An eſteem of wiſe and virtuous characters is always rational, becauſe it is neceſſarily connected with the love of virtue itſelf. But this

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is not the notion of friendſhip; which is deſcribed to be, 'a *peculiar relation*, formed by a conſent and harmony of minds *,' as well as founded in virtue; from whence, it is an undeniable conſequence, that it cannot be every man's duty, ſince it evidently depends on circumſtances, that are quite out of our power. There are innumerable inſtances, in which perſons may find ſeveral among their acquaintance, and in the ſame ſphere of life, whom they highly eſteem; but not one, proper to be choſen for *a cloſe* and *intimate* friend: So that the recommending private friendſhip, *in the general*, muſt have been very abſurd; ſince it is only a *rare* and *accidental* obligation, and never falls in the way of a great part of mankind.

And, beſides, it might have been attended with extremely injurious effects. For the bulk of the world thinking it a duty of religion, and a neceſſary branch of ſublime and heroic virtue, would enter into *raſh*, *unconcerted*, and *diſagreeable* alliances, which muſt naturally produce a great deal of diſorder, and diſturb the peace of ſocieties. Whereas, while they act upon the principle of univerſal benevolence, no ill conſequences can enſue; and, therefore, the inculcating this principle only, as an eſſential part of morality, and leaving private friendſhip to fall in as a branch of it, juſt as prudence, on a view of all circumſtances, directs, is the *wiſeſt* and *beſt* way of inſtructing mankind.

We may add farther, to vindicate our Saviour's conduct on this occaſion, that there has been very little need, in any age, to put men upon cultivating particular friendſhips, and the love of their country; but rather to give a check, to theſe narrow limited affections, and correct the exorbitancies of them. Mankind have a *natural* inclination to both, and there is no fear of their

* *Characteriſticks*,

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neglecting either, ſo far as it is truly generous and uſeful; on the contrary, the only danger is, that they will be carried to ſo great a height, as to be prejudicial to the general good. The experience of our own times, and the hiſtories of all ages, are an ample juſtification of the truth of this remark.

FRIENDSHIPS have been always frequent enough——But of what kind are they? Do they not ſpring from *humour* and *caprice*, from a harmony of *odd*, *whimſical*, and *unaccountable* tempers, from *ſingularity*, and *ſelfiſhneſs?* Or, are they built upon the ſolid foundations of *honour*, and *virtue?* In like manner, zeal for the intereſt of a particular country, is it not *univerſal?* But, then, is it truly *benevolent* and *public-ſpirited?* Far from it. It is, more commonly, an abſurd and childiſh prejudice, that makes men extravagantly fond of themſelves, above all other nations: It is a zeal, that makes an *idol* of our country, and is ready to ſacrifice even the good of the whole ſpecies to it. There was no reaſon, then, that our Saviour ſhould particularly inculcate theſe things, to which mankind have ſo *natural* a turn, and are ſo apt to indulge to *exceſs*. His great work was to rectify all diſorders, and, in an eſpecial manner, *the abuſe of good principles*, and the extravagancies that ariſe from it: And this he has effectually done, by enforcing the obligations of univerſal goodneſs; which will *regulate* all inferior affections, without *deſtroying* them. For the obſerving this rule will lead to every inſtance, both of friendſhip and love of our country, that is really *amiable*, and *beneficial*; and diſcourage ſuch only of either kind, as are *unmanly*, and *miſchievous*. Let me obſerve,

THIRDLY, that there was *a particular reaſon*, from the circumſtances of the world at that time, why the *Chriſtian* religion ſhould

ſhould not directly and ſtrongly recommend the love of our country. In general, it is not a thing neceſſary to be inſiſted on, becauſe, as has been hinted above, it is included in the love of mankind; and what all are powerfully inclined to, by education, cuſtom, their own particular intereſt, and the like: And it was much leſs to be expected at a juncture, when an affection for particular countries was *a general nuſance*, and triumphed over juſtice and humanity.

For, it is well known, that the *Jews* were ſo partially fond of their own nation, that they looked upon themſelves, as the only favourites of heaven; which made them ſevere and rigid in their cenſures, and moroſe and unſociable to all who were not of their religion. And, undoubtedly, the notion, that ſeems, generally, to have prevailed amongſt them, that the *Meſſiah* was to be their temporal prince, and extend his dominion over all the earth, would have put them on ſubduing and oppreſſing other countries, as ſoon as they imagined they had a favourable opportunity for it. They wanted nothing, but the power, to effect this vile and barbarous ſcheme, which their *ſelfiſhneſs* and *pride* ſuggeſted.—And as for the *Romans*, whoſe noble lectures of benevolence and generoſity are ſo much boaſted of, and the love of their country, repreſented as the very perfection of heroic virtue; the *Romans*, I ſay, were the *plagues* and *ſcourges* of mankind, and had actually carried their arms and conqueſts, and, together with them, terror, ſlavery, and ruin, through the greateſt part of the then known world.

Was this now a time to recommend narrow views, and an attachment to particular ſocieties, when the *general intereſt* had ſuffered ſo much by it? It was rather the way, to have deſtroy-

ed *public benevolence* altogether. The proper leſſon to be inculcated, in ſuch a confuſed and degenerate ſtate of things, was certainly *univerſal goodneſs*; in order to put a ſtop to the progreſs of ambition, avarice, and luxury, which had introduced ſuch dreadful deſolation, and ſubverted liberty, juſtice, and all ſocial virtues: This, indeed, was the only remedy, that could be applied to the prevailing diſorders. So that our Saviour's ſcheme of benevolence, is not only, in itſelf, the nobleſt and moſt God-like that we can conceive of; but in keeping to fundamental and general principles, and not deſcending to lower conſiderations, he acted the part of a *wiſe reformer*——a friend to the *univerſal happineſs*——and an enemy to *oppreſſion* and *tyranny*. Suffer me to add,

In the LAST place, that though the *Chriſtian* religion, has not particularly enjoined private friendſhip, and the love of our country, becauſe, ſo far as they have any thing virtuous and commendable in them, they fall in, neceſſarily, with the regular purſuit of the general good; and becauſe it was needleſs in itſelf, this being the conſtant bent of human nature; and, finally, becauſe it is always more proper to reſtrain the exceſſes of theſe principles, than to allow them ſcope and latitude; and was ſo, particularly, at the time of our Saviour's appearance; though, I ſay, for theſe very ſufficient and weighty reaſons, they are not expreſsly enjoined by the *Chriſtian* inſtitution: Yet it is a *falſe inſinuation*, that it has given no encouragement to them. For we have, in the character of *Chriſt* himſelf, an eminent example of each of theſe virtues, which is equally binding, as an expreſs law, upon all who acknowledge his authority. He choſe but twelve perſons, to be his immediate and conſtant followers, and one of them he made his *friend*. Accordingly we read, in the hiſto-

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ry of the New Teſtament, of *the diſciple whom Jeſus loved* *; whom he always treated with confidence, and particular marks of tenderneſs and affection. And here was a friendſhip, that ſprang from *virtue*; from a conſent and harmony of the moſt *benevolent*, *mild*, and *amiable* diſpoſitions; it was entirely *rational*, *diſintereſted*, *generous*, and *faithful*; ſubſervient to the *univerſal good*, being founded in the love of goodneſs itſelf; and, conſequently, a perfect pattern for our imitation.

And was not his *weeping* over *Jeruſalem*, from a ſenſe of its impending ruin, a noble proof of his ardent concern for the *public welfare?* Were not all his labours to make his *country* happy, by reforming its corruptions and vices? Was it not for this, that he ſuffered ſo many abuſes? Nay, did he not *even die* for the good of his country? I may add, to this, the example of St. *Paul*, who was ſo tranſported by his affection for his countrymen, as to wiſh, that the greateſt of evils might befall himſelf, even *to be accurſed from* Chriſt †, if, by that means, he might be the inſtrument of preſerving and eſtabliſhing their proſperity.

These are inſtances, than which, if we take in all circumſtances, none ever were, or can be, more great and heroic; and had they been found, among the old *Greeks*, or *Romans*, they would have been celebrated with the moſt laboured and magnificent encomiums. But when men ſet themſelves to magnify the powers of reaſon, and run down revelation, every thing, in the latter, has a *low* and *invidious* turn given to it; the moſt God-like virtues loſe their luſtre; and the moſt exalted ſcheme of morality is debaſed and vilified: As, in the caſe we have been conſidering, *Chriſtianity* has been repreſented as being defective, for what is its chief

* John xix. 20. † Rom. ix. 3.

excellence, and renders it vaſtly preferable to any ſyſtem of moral philoſophy, or any inſtitution of religion, that ever appeared in the world.

I MAY add (to all that has been already offered) with the greateſt propriety, that, in the point of *the love of our country*, the *whole* doctrine of revelation is perfectly conſiſtent with *itſelf*, and conſonant to *reaſon*. For, under the *Jewiſh* diſpenſation, *David* has given a noble proof, and ſpecimen, of it, in the following lively, and affecting, paſſage.——*Pray for the peace of* Jeruſalem: *They ſhall proſper, that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and proſperity within thy palaces. For my brethren, and companions ſakes, I will now ſay, peace be within thee. Becauſe of the houſe of the* LORD *our* GOD, *I will ſeek thy good**. The *motives*, ſuggeſted in theſe words, to this ſublime branch of *ſocial* virtue, are various, but completely *rational*; and may be ſo diſpoſed, and ranged, in our conſideration of them, as to riſe, in a natural *order*, one *above* another.

IN the FIRST place, the love of our country may be *properly* cultivated from this topic; 'that our own *private happineſs* will be moſt effectually ſecured, by a ſteady attachment to the *general* intereſt, and uſing our utmoſt endeavours to advance it.' ——*They ſhall proſper, that love thee.*

AGAIN, 'we are ſtrongly prompted, by the ties of *natural affection*, and all the obligations and endearments of private *friendſhip*, to be inceſſantly *ſtudious* of our country's good; in which the welfare of thoſe, for whom we are moſt nearly, and

* Pſal. cxxii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

juſtly,

juſtly, concerned, is neceſſarily involved.' If we are *indifferent*, what becomes of *parents*, *children*, *friends*; of thoſe, who are the more *immediate objects* of our kind and gracious diſpoſitions; we muſt have thrown off *humanity*. For *nature* itſelf teaches us, to abhor, and brand with peculiar infamy, ſuch barbarous *inſenſibility*, and *ſavageneſs*, of temper. We may, therefore, juſtly ſay, with reſpect to our *country*, and yet deſerve to be ranked, among its moſt ſincere and generous *friends*——*For* our *brethren*, *and companions*, *ſakes*, we *will now*, and always, *ſay*, *peace be within thee.*

But the moſt *noble* and *generous* motives, to the love of our country, are ſtill behind. And they are 'a concern for *univerſal equity*, for *univerſal liberty*, for *public order*, and *harmony*, for the preſervation, and ſecurity, of the *natural*, and *civil*, *rights* of mankind; and a concern for the maintenance of *true religion*, in its original uncorrupted ſimplicity, as the ſureſt *prop* of all regular government, and the moſt effectual *guard*, and *enforcement*, of the ſocial virtues; and for the immunities of *conſcience*, which are *ſacred*, *unalienable*, and *equal*, in all'——That we may not be *deprived* of the ineſtimable privilege, of a free *examination*, and *choice*, of our religion; nor *oppreſſed*, in any degree, for not complying with the *ſtate-religion*; nor have our underſtandings *awed*, and *enſlaved*, by the terrors of *human authority*: Which is the vileſt *indignity*, that can be offered to human nature, and the loweſt *depreſſion* of its intellectual, and moral, capacities; and to an ingenuous mind, which is conſcious of its *native* freedom, and dignity, much more grievous than *death* itſelf. Both theſe *ſublime* motives are diſtinctly ſuggeſted, by the *Pſalmiſt*, as the *ground* of his pious and earneſt prayer, *for the peace of* Jeruſalem. *For there*, ſays he, *are*, the *thrones of judgment*; and, again

again——*Becauſe of the houſe, of the* LORD *our* GOD, *I will ſeek thy good* *.

LET us then be perſuaded to cultivate, to the utmoſt, diſintereſted and univerſal benevolence: For what is the perfection of our religion muſt, alſo, be the rectitude and honour of our nature. Let our conſtant aim be, the good of mankind. Let us enlarge our minds, daily, from little narrow prejudices; that all our private pleaſures, our friendſhips, our regards to our country, may be regulated with a view to this, as their ultimate end. Nay, if it were poſſible, we ſhould extend our thoughts beyond our own ſpecies, and take in the *univerſe of rational beings:* For the more unbounded ſcope we give, to our generous benevolence and compaſſion, the more truly noble it is: and the more nearly do we reſemble the ſupreme fountain of goodneſs, whoſe *tender mercies are over all his works* †.

BUT I cannot yet entirely diſmiſs this ſubject; allow me, therefore, to add, that though the exerciſe of *mutual*, and *univerſal*, *benevolence* is an eſſential, and unalterable, branch of *moral* duty, evidently founded in *nature*, and to which, we are ſtrongly, and conſtantly, *incited* (till nature is perverted from its *firſt biaſs*), by ſome of the *warmeſt* propenſions, and tendencies, in our compoſition: Yet mankind have found out various *excuſes*, for *ſuſpending* the natural ſenſe of humanity, for *extirpating* good-nature, or, at leaſt, *controuling* the benevolent friendly diſpoſition, and *confining* it to a few favourite objects; ſubſtituting, in the room of it, with reſpect to *others*, moroſeneſs, and cruelty. And nothing has contributed more, towards this

* Pſal. cxxii. † Pſal. cxlv. 9.

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melancholy effect, than their conſidering themſelves, in the *narrow* view, of members of a *particular ſociety*, governed by the ſame political *laws*, and diſtinguiſhed by the peculiarities of their *language*, *dreſs*, and outward *manners*; and as the inhabitants of the *ſame country*, more immediately combined, for mutual *defence*; inſtead of extending their ideas, and looking on *all* mankind, as *one* great *ſociety*, between whom, by the laws of GOD and nature, there is an intimate, and inſeperable, *communion* of intereſts. Thus, their attachment, to *a part*, leſſens their concern for the good of *the whole*.

AND this generally ſprings, from one, or other, of theſe two cauſes——either 'from a *national pride*, from which, ariſes a *contempt* of others; or, a *competition* of *intereſts*, which begets *averſion*, and *hatred*.'

'As for the high *value*, that men, of almoſt every nation, are apt to ſet upon *themſelves*, above the inhabitants of *other countries*, it is, in a great meaſure, *chimerical*; the effect of *vanity*, and *partiality*.' In moſt caſes, they *arrogate* to themſelves *advantages*, which they cannot juſtly *claim*; or, elſe, being ſtrongly *prepoſſeſſed*, in favour of *their own* diſpoſitions, and manners, *chiefly*, becauſe they are their own, and when, perhaps, they are liable to many reaſonable *objections*, they neceſſarily diſlike the *contrary* diſpoſitions, and manners, in other nations.

BUT, not to inſiſt on this, let it be allowed, 'that we really enjoy all the *ſuperiority*, which we fondly imagine ourſelves to be poſſeſſed of,' even this will not afford the leaſt *excuſe*, for treating the reſt of our fellow-creatures, with *indifference*, or *neglect*, and thinking them *unworthy* our compaſſion, and charitable aſ-

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ſiſtance: And to make this plain, beyond all diſpute, I need only mention particular inſtances.

'Do we, then, *deſpiſe* others, becauſe we live in a more *temperate* and *healthy* air, or climate, or are, as a nation, more *populous*, *rich*, and *powerful?* This, if true, is the moſt *childiſh* of all prejudices.' For we may, with equal juſtice, behave *inhumanely*, and *inſolently*, towards our neighbours, on account of difference of *complexion*, *features*, or *habit* of *body:* And, thus, the offices of *mutual benevolence* (without which, all the *pleaſures* of human life muſt be deſtroyed, nay, even the *world*, of *rational* beings, cannot long *ſubſiſt*,) will be made to depend entirely on *accidents*, and *trivial* circumſtances, that are of no ſignificancy, in adjuſting the natural *rights* of men, or fixing their *characters*, as *worthy*, or *unworthy*, of our regard.

AGAIN, 'do we, as a nation, treat others *contemptuouſly*, becauſe we eſteem them *rude*, and *ignorant*; and look upon ourſelves as a much more *wiſe*, and *ingenious*, people, more *poliſhed*, and *refined*, with reſpect to the arts and embelliſhments of life?' On the ſame foundation (ſince truth, and right conduct, are invariably the *ſame*, in *all climates*) the wiſe, in every country, may *deſpiſe* the ignorant amongſt *their own country-men*, and refuſe to condeſcend, to *aſſiſt* them in their diſtreſſes, or *relieve* their neceſſities. So that, upon this ſcheme, *an improved underſtanding* is abſolutely neceſſary, to *intitle* a man to the common offices of *civility*, and *friendſhip*; and the *uncultivated*, *unthinking*, multitude deſerve no better, than to be *abandoned* to want, and miſery. 'Whereas the *wiſeſt* man, upon earth, can have no *excuſe*, from his *character* for *ſuperior* wiſdom (which, on the contrary, will render every inſtance of *cruelty*, in him, more *monſtrous*,

monſtrous, and *aggravated*) he can, I ſay, have no *excuſe*, from his *character* for wiſdom, to deny *mercy* to a *brute* creature: And ſhall, then, this poor *plea ſcreen* him from *reproach*, can it in the leaſt, *palliate* his inhumanity, if he *relents* not at the ſufferings of one of his *own ſpecies*; who has a nature, of the *ſame* inherent *dignity*, with himſelf; and capable, though for the preſent it be *diſguiſed* and *diſfigured*, of conſiderable *intellectual* and *moral* improvements; and of ſhining with ſome degrees, even of a *God-like* luſtre.'

Or, if we are convinced, that, as *a nation*, we ought not to deſpiſe thoſe, who are leſs *happy*, with reſpect either to *natural advantages*, or, *refinements* in knowledge, and civility——' can we think it at all more reaſonable, to treat them with *ſcorn* and *inſolence*, becauſe we are a *free* people; whoſe properties, and juſt rights, are ſecured to us by wiſe laws, and under a mild and equal government; while they are debaſed into the condition of *ſlaves*, and oppreſſed, harraſſed, and plundered by an *arbitrary* and *tyrannical* power? This, indeed, proves, that we are in a much more *agreeable* and *honourable* ſituation; but can give us no right to *inſult* the *unfortunate*: On the contrary, they are the moſt *natural*, and *proper*, objects of our compaſſion. Having ſo many *inconveniences*, and *hardſhips*, to conflict with, and the *ſtrength* of their minds enfeebled, and broken, by the oppreſſions they labour under, our *generoſity* ſhould the rather incline us, when ſuch objects preſent themſelves, to *ſoften* and *alleviate* their cares, and *raiſe* their drooping ſpirits: And it muſt argue a *ſavage* and *brutal* diſpoſition, to ſink them down *lower*, by our contempt, or cruelty. We may, with altogether as much reaſon, eſteem our fellow-creatures *unworthy* of our reſpect, and aſſiſtance, for any *unavoidable defects* of body, or mind, whether *natural*,

tural, or *accidental:* 'And, thus, *charity* will be, in a great meaſure, baniſhed the world; and thoſe, whoſe *melancholy* circumſtances loudly *demand* the exerciſe of our *benevolence*, will, for no other cauſe, but becauſe they *want it moſt*, be *deprived* of it; and what is the moſt *powerful*, and *engaging*, *motive* to compaſſion, will, both againſt the dictates of nature, and the rules of religion, be uſed as an *argument* to *extirpate* all ſenſe of compaſſion, and abandon the *miſerable* to *deſpair*.'

THUS it appears, that *national pride*, though ſupported by the moſt plauſible pretences, will not juſtify our expreſſing contempt, or a cruel indifference, towards the reſt of mankind: The next thing, to be conſidered, is, 'whether it will not be better defended, by a *competition* of *intereſts*.'

BUT this will ſoon appear to be an excuſe, equally *abſurd*, and *frivolous*. For, upon the very ſame foundation, all *private perſons*, whoſe intereſts happen to *claſh* and *interfere*, muſt be equally *excuſed* even in the *ſame community*, from performing acts of beneficence to each other. 'And as this is *really* the caſe, in innumerable inſtances, and will be *thought* to be the caſe, in infinitely more, by *ſuſpicious* and *ſordid* tempers; the conſequence, upon the whole, muſt be this, that there can *remain* ſcarce any exerciſe of charity at all: And, from our thinking ourſelves not obliged to *do good* to others, the *tranſition* will be too eaſy to *fraud*, *oppreſſion*, and a general *malevolence*.'

THE *true* ſtate of the caſe is this——The firſt and great bond of *union*, amongſt mankind, is their *common nature* and *wants*, their mutual *relation* to, and *dependence* on, each other. This being (and having been in all ages) the fixed and invariable

con-

conſtitution, makes the laws of *benevolence* of *univerſal*, and *eternal*, obligation. No *voluntary* combinations, engagements, or alliances, can *alter* this *original* diſpoſition, this *eſtabliſhed* courſe, and order, of things. If they *do*, they are againſt *nature*, againſt the *authority*, and *will*, of the GOD of nature, and the manifeſt *deſign* of our creation. The *reaſon*, why men form themſelves into *nations*, 'ought *not* to be, becauſe they have *particular intereſts*, *diſtinct* from, and much leſs *oppoſite* to, the *univerſal good*:' For, when the *views*, of the moſt *politic* and *flouriſhing* ſocieties, are inconſiſtent with the happineſs of the *reſt* of their fellow creatures, they are what humanity, and religion, *diſclaim*. Every nation, therefore, ſhould conſider itſelf as a ſociety, or nation, of *men*; *each* of the *members* of which is obliged, in his *perſonal* character, to exerciſe all that *honour*, *juſtice*, *candour*, and *compaſſion*, towards one of *another country* (however *remote* from, or *diſagreeable* to, *his own*) which are *due* to him, as a *man*, by an eſſential and unalienable *right*. Otherwiſe, our *ſocial engagements* transform us into quite *different* beings, from what GOD *made* us, and give us inclinations, and proſpects, quite *oppoſite* to thoſe, with which *he*, *originally*, endued us.

BESIDES, what *rule* can we fix, for regulating the *extent* of our benevolence, more *perfect*, than that of the goodneſs of the common Creator? Or whom can we *imitate*, with more *honour*, or rational *ſatisfaction*, than the great pattern of ſupreme and ſpotleſs rectitude? Now his munificence and bounty are *diffuſed* through the *whole world*; throughout *all nations*, however *differing*, from each other, in their *laws*, and *cuſtoms*; however *unpolite*, and *barbarous*, and *ignorant* of the *true religion*. 'Surely, then, out of regard to his *example*, as well as to the obligations of common *humanity*, we muſt look upon the *whole*

human race, as *entitled* to ſome degrees of *reſpect*, and *affection*; and *condemn* all ſuch *national prejudices*, all ſuch *attachments* to *particular* communities (however *excelling* in their ſeveral policies, and conſtitutions of government) as *oppoſe*, or *controul*, that more open, expanded, and generous diſpoſition of benevolence, which directs to the purſuit of the *univerſal good*.'

'EQUALLY *inconſiſtent* is it, with all the great rules of benevolence and goodneſs, to make the moſt *important differences*, with reſpect to *religion*, an excuſe, for *ſuſpending* any of the mutual offices of *kindneſs*, that are *due* from one man to another.' Let four inflexible *bigots* ſeriouſly conſider this, who put on *moroſe* and *ſullen* airs, in *converſing* with thoſe, who are of a different *perſuaſion* from themſelves, even in *abſtruſe* and *intricate* controverſies; and let them *bluſh* at their conduct, which is ſo repugnant to all the principles of humanity.

BUT the moſt notorious violations of the laws of nature, and *Chriſtianity*, ſeldom want advocates to appear in their defence, when *religion* is concerned.——And, therefore, it is pleaded, 'that *zeal*, for the *honour* of GOD, require us to ſhew a ſharp reſentment, againſt ſuch *impious notions*, as either ſubvert the the *truth* of religion, or corrupt its native *ſimplicity*.' In anſwer to which, I would aſk, 'what is it, that the *honour* of GOD does, in reality, *demand* from us? Not, ſurely, that we ſupport his *authority*, by a breach of his moſt ſacred *laws*; not, that we *debaſe* his *image*, in *ourſelves*, by rooting out of our minds all ſentiments of *generoſity* and *mercy*, and by *perſecuting it*, with ſcorn and cruelty, in *others*; not, that we *plead* the cauſe of *religion*, by *renouncing* its moſt amiable and important *principles*

——But

——But only, that by our *moderation*, and *equity*, and *mild condescending* behaviour, joined with the *force* of clear and solid argument, we *convince gain-sayers*, and bring those, *that oppose themselves, to the acknowledgment of the truth* *.'

For *unbelief*, and *error*, when we have good reason to suppose, that they spring from *unfairness*, and *disingenuity*, of temper, and lead to *impiety*, and *vice*, are *misfortunes*, which deserve our *pity*, and which it is extremely barbarous to *insult*. They ought not to be *aggravated*, by the *inhumanity* of men, and their refusing, such *unhappy* persons, any share in their *compassion*; since the abovementioned are crimes, *cognisable* only at God's tribunal, and will receive their due reward, *hereafter*, from the impartial judge of all. Add to this, that such a *severe* conduct is no *credit* to religion itself, but gives a very *unamiable*, and *shocking*, notion of it; as if it laid more stress on *believing* right, and having the *same apprehensions* with respect to the *doctrines* of religion, than on that *rectitude* of heart, and that exact uninterrupted course of *benevolence*, which are *divine* dispositions, and which, it must be the *end*, of all true piety, to promote. Nor is this the way to reclaim the erroneous, whose prejudices must be handled *gently*, for fear of *inflaming*, and *hardening*, their minds; the natural consequences, of a *harsh contemptuous* treatment, being always found to be, the making them more *inattentive* to reason, and rendering their prejudices more *incorrigible*.

Nay, I will venture to put two cases——The one, 'of persons, who *believe* all the *doctrines* of *revelation*, and are animated by an uncommon *ardour* to *propagate* the good cause, they have

* 2 Tim. ii. 25.

espoused;

eſpouſed; to ſuch a *degree*, that, with the *Phariſee*, they *compaſs ſea and land to make proſelytes* *; but, notwithſtanding their *accurate faith*, have no *bowels of mercies*, no *kindneſs*, and *humbleneſs of mind*, no *meekneſs*, and *long-ſuffering* †——The other of ſuch, as are *unſatisfied* about the *truth* of theſe important principles of religion, and, yet, make conſcience of exerciſing *humanity*, and the *ſocial virtues*'——Upon comparing both theſe characters together, the mind of man will, I think, naturally come to this determination, that the latter, though it be more defective in the *theory*, yet being more perfect in the *practice*, of religion (which is the excellent part) muſt, of courſe, be more *amiable* in itſelf, and *acceptable* to GOD. For to repreſent *religion*, as ſubverſive of juſtice and charity, is making it *as bad*, as any ſcheme of mere *ſpeculative impiety*, that the *weakneſs*, or *wickedneſs*, of mankind can invent. 'The duties of *religion* are the duties of *men*; and muſt, therefore, be conſiſtent with the *whole* duty, with the *natural* duty, that one man owes to another.'

* Mat. xxiii. 15. † Col. iii. 12.

CHAP

CHAP. XIII.

Of Unity, *and* Peace.

THERE are ſome duties, of that *ſelf-evident* certainty and importance, that a perſon, who conſiders them in an abſtracted view, would be apt to think a *particular illuſtration* and *enforcement* of them to be, in a great meaſure, needleſs: And, yet, the experience of all times aſſures us, that to *theſe*, the *attention* of mankind is moſt difficult to be fixed; and that *in caſes*, where our duty is plain and unqueſtionable, and of univerſal moment and concern, *ill-humour*, and *pride* generally make the ſtrongeſt *oppoſition*; and the *influence* of irregular habits, and licentious paſſions, is both more *perverſe* and *incorrigible* in it-ſelf, and *malignant* in its effects. The reaſon of which, I apprehend, is clearly this——that the higheſt obligations of reaſonable creatures, *i. e.* the obligations to piety, to univerſal benevolence, and the ſocial virtues, are moſt *pure* and *diſintereſted*; they require a temper weaned, and alienated, from the deſire of a *contracted partial good*; and conſequently, they directly contradict the moſt prevailing, *wrong*, *biaſſes* of human nature.

I HAVE already proved, in the firſt chapter of my diſcourſes on ſocial morality, that the *relative* ſituation, and character, of man are plainly and diſtinctly expreſſed, in his very *conſtitution*: His daily, and various, *wants* loudly proclaim it: He finds, in him-

himſelf, inſuppreſſible *inſtincts*, that force him to acknowledge it: So that here, there is not ſo much need of *convincing* his underſtanding, as of *exciting* him to reflection. For let him but open his eyes, and look around him calmly, and he will find, that *variance* and *contrariety*, in *moral* and *ſocial* bodies, is, even to ſenſe and common obſervation, diſagreeable and monſtrous; like *ill-proportioned* parts, *jarring* principles, and uſeleſs *excreſcencies*, in the *natural* body: While *mutual agreement*, and *harmonious operation*, muſt be allowed to have a delightful and beneficial aſpect. *David*, therefore, has beautifully repreſented it as a thing both *obvious*, and *remarkable*; highly worthy our regard, and yet, with all, ſo eaſily diſcerned, that without the help of abſtruſe reaſoning, and if we conſult experience alone, we muſt ſee it, and, be ſtruck and impreſſed with a *lively notion* of it. *Behold*, ſays he, *how good, and how pleaſant* it is, *for brethren to dwell together in unity* *!

THIS is illuſtrated, in the ſubſequent part of the *Pſalm*, by two very expreſſive and elegant ſimilitudes. *Firſt*, it is compared to *the precious ointment*, appointed to be uſed in conſecrating the *high-prieſt*; which, by the preſcription of the law of *Moſes*, was to be compoſed of *ſeveral rich ſpecies*, that, by being rightly *tempered* and *mixed* together, yielded a moſt *fragrant odour*. It is equally delightful to the *moral ſenſe*, to find among *brethren*, of *various* capacities, tempers, and conditions, ſtrict friendſhip and an indiſſoluble union. And to deſcribe, beſides the *pleaſures* reſulting from it, its *uſe* and *ſalutary influence*, it is compared, farther, to the *dew* of heaven, which *refreſhes* and *fructifies* dry and parched mountains; to the *dew of* Hermon, and the dew *that*

* Pſal. cxxxiii. 1.

deſcended

deſcended upon the mountains of Sion * : Which *mountains*, being at a conſiderable *diſtance* from each other, the ſimilitude might be intended to ſignify the *extenſive* benefits, that are derived from an *union* of hearts and counſels; from a mutual, uninterrupted, *intercourſe* of kind and condeſcending offices; which will be felt by *all ranks* of men, who are joined together in *ſociety*. To which we may add, that it diffuſes one *common ſpirit*, of harmony, ſtrength, and vigour, through *different ſocieties*; through the *whole collective body* of mankind; and the *univerſal church* of God. And as the paſſage of the *Pſalmiſt* firſt cited, and thus illuſtrated by himſelf, directs to a moſt natural and comprehenſive method, of treating farther on this ſubject; I ſhall for the moſt part, in what remains, follow the order therein ſuggeſted.

But, ſurely, I need not attempt to prove, that we are not to underſtand the term *brethren*, in its moſt ſtrict and confined ſignification; becauſe, though that ſenſe muſt be included, yet it is evident, that the word itſelf has a more large and capacious meaning. *All mankind* may be juſtly denominated *brethren*, as they are the *off-ſpring* of God †. And this notion of *brotherhood*, which is the firſt and great bond of union, is plainly inculcated in the holy Scriptures, and allowed, and argued from, by the beſt moral writers. Again, the *members* of the ſame *civil community* are likewiſe, in a figurative and alluſive ſenſe, fitly ſtiled *brethren*: And, upon a ſimilar ground of reaſon, the *profeſſors* of the *ſame religion*; becauſe they are united together, in one concern and intereſt. Each of theſe correſponds, in ſeveral views, with the idea of *a family* raiſed and enlarged: We therefore find, that all the ſubjects of God's moral kingdom,

* Pſal. cxxxiii. 2, 3. † Acts xvii. 29.

comprehended under the ſpiritual adminiſtration and government of *Chriſt*, are called, by St. *Paul*, *the whole family, in heaven, and earth* *; and the entire race of mankind may, with equal propriety, be repreſented as *the family* of GOD.

I SHALL therefore, in my following diſcourſe, conſider the character of *brethren*, and, conſequently, the *unity*, which it is now my intention to recommend, in the *utmoſt latitude* it is capable of; becauſe, the more univerſally this *excellent temper* prevails, *virtue*, and *order*, and *happineſs*, will be, in proportion, more univerſal. The beauty and uſefulneſs of it ariſe, in a great meaſure, from its being *extended*; from its *exceeding* the *bounds* of particular nations, and religious profeſſions, and not being reduced within *a narrower limit*, than that of the whole ſpecies. However, I ſhall not omit to direct the application, of this general reaſoning, to *peculiar* and *ſubordinate* inſtances; and, eſpecially, to the caſe of *religious unity*; to which, in the opinion of ſome very celebrated and judicious interpreters, the words of the *Pſalmiſt*, above-cited, have a more *immediate* reference. And, now, having briefly fixed the extent of it, and ſhewn who the perſons are, among whom, it ought always to be cultivated: I ſhall,

NEXT, enquire into the *nature* of *the unity*, which both reaſon and religion recommend. This is a fundamental, and moſt important, queſtion. For unleſs we can ſettle clearly, wherein *this unity* conſiſts, it muſt be impoſſible for us to determine, whether it be either *amiable*, or *beneficial*: Since it is moſt certain, that we can *believe*, and *affirm*, nothing of that, of which we *know*

* Eph. iii. 15.

nothing;

nothing; and while our *notions* are dark, uncertain, and confuſed, we can only *ſpeak* with darkneſs, confuſion, and uncertainty.

ALL mankind, indeed, ſeem to be agreed, that *ſome kind* of *unity* is abſolutely neceſſary, but they have, for the moſt part, underſtood it *wrong*; and have, therefore, propoſed *impoſſible* and *romantic* ſchemes, which can never take place; and their very zeal, for *unity*, has occaſioned infinite and incurable *diviſions*. And thus it muſt ever happen, to the diſturbance of the *peace* of ſocieties, *civil* and *religious*, unleſs we aim at *an unity* that is *poſſible*, and *natural*.

Now this, in the FIRST place, cannot be *unity* of *belief*, and *ſpeculative opinion*: Becauſe men's underſtandings, their opportunities for enquiry, their means of knowledge, are vaſtly *different*; and, while *theſe differences* continue (as they doubtleſs will, being a part of the original conſtitution of things, to the end of the world) it is abſurd to expect, that their apprehenſions will be exactly the *ſame*. This kind of *unity* is *above* the preſent ſtate, and circumſtances, of human nature. *Tyrants* may attempt to *force* it; the *crafty* and *ambitious* may eagerly contend for it, to ſerve their ſecret purpoſes; and the *bigot*, from ſelf conceit, and narrowneſs of mind: But the thing itſelf can *never ſubſiſt*, unleſs the condition of men be entirely changed, and their nature new-modelled. Their faculties muſt be raiſed, to the *ſame degree* of ſtrength and clearneſs, and their helps and advantages muſt likewiſe be *equal*, before it can be ſuppoſed, that their ſentiments will perfectly, and conſtantly, *correſpond*, even in points of moment and importance. Or, however, there is but *one poſſible way*, by which ſuch an *unnatural union* can be intro-

duced; and that is, by the blind unthinking compliance, and implicit ſtupidity, of the generality of mankind.

But if this be admitted as true, *viz.* that *unity* of *opinion* is a thing never likely to happen, from the *frame* of human nature; may we not *accord* in *one outward profeſſion*, and *agree* to maintain in all matters of conſequence, for the ſake of regularity and peace, an *harmony* of *ſounds*, though our *inward ſenſe* be different? It is certain, that men *may* conſent to this; but what *valuable end* will it anſwer? Is ſuch an unity as this *deſirable*, that can only be ſupported by bare-faced hypocriſy, that exchanges real religion for formality, and has a direct tendency to baniſh virtue out of the world, and deſtroy the firſt foundations of mutual faith, and confidence? Can that be a *pleaſing* unity, which disfigures human nature, and repreſents it, to outward appearance, quite oppoſite to what it is in itſelf? Can it be an *agreeable* thing, always to wear a maſk, and be obliged to conceal the true ſentiments of our hearts? Or, can ſuch an unity as this deſerve to be ſtiled *good*, which muſt effectually prevent the propagation of truth, and all thoſe improvements and diſcoveries, which we are capable of communicating one to another; which can only ſerve to tranſmit ignorance and darkneſs, perpetual and inviolable, to all ſucceeding generations?

As the whole of this is neither *religion*, nor common ſenſe, but ſubſtituting a mere *name* and *pretence* of order, in the room of that *natural order*, which almighty God has eſtabliſhed; *peace* and *harmony*, ſo far as they are worthy our care, and contribute to the purpoſes of virtue, and the good of mankind, may unqueſtionably be *preſerved* without it. To *agree* in *opinion* is

is entirely out of *our power*; to *profeſs alike*, whilſt we believe differently, is *baſe*, and *diſhoneſt*, and *deſtructive* of the moſt ſacred obligations, and, upon that account, ought never to be the matter of our *choice*——So that neither of theſe can be any part of that *unity*, which we are bound to cultivate, as a religious and moral duty: But the whole ſum of it muſt be reſolved into this; 'that condeſcenſion, mutual forbearance, and an harmony of mild benevolent affections, *ſupply the place* of that *uniformity* of faith and profeſſion, which are, morally ſpeaking, *impoſſible*.'

And to recommend this generous ſentiment, as moſt ſuitable to the natural relations, in which mankind ſtand to each other, it needs only to be conſidered, that brotherhood, and amity; brotherhood, and cordial friendſhip; brotherhood, and community of intereſt; brotherhood, and an indulgent candid temper, are very nearly *co-incident* ideas; becauſe, in the nature of things, they neither *are*, nor *can be*, ſeparated. When, therefore, all *mankind*, when all *Chriſtians*, *love as brethren*, they ſupport their reſpective characters with *propriety*, and *honour*. But when, about matters of *remote* concern, in which their *general relation* is not at all intereſted, they purſue oppoſite views, with eſtranged and alienated affections, *hateful*, and *hating one another*: This *ſhocks* our very *firſt* reflections, as a ſcandal to human nature, and infinitely diſgraceful to all religion. On the contrary, as, in the *natural world*, it ſtrikes us with an agreeable ſurprize and pleaſure, to ſee the *various effects*, of divine wiſdom and omnipotence, *connected* in their uſe, and *conſpiring* jointly to one grand deſign, by the influence and force of *neceſſary* laws; it muſt appear, at leaſt, equally beautiful, to find the *vaſtly different* humours, characters, and particular intereſts of *moral agents*, *volun-*

voluntarily directed to the univerſal good. When a ſedate and undiſturbed *union*, and *harmony*, are eſtabliſhed in the beſt and nobleſt part of the creation, this is an object, that every wiſe and good man muſt, one would think, ſurvey with a *ſenſible* and *ſtrong complacency*; and GOD himſelf with *approbation*, and *calm delight*. No *true pleaſure*, indeed, can be reaſonably expected to reſult from any *alliances* and *confederacies*, however harmonious and ſtrictly maintained, in *fraud* and *iniquity*. The very *end* propoſed, in all aſſociations of this kind, is *vile* and *deteſtable*; and therefore the cloſer the *union* is, the greater is the *guilt*; as it can only tend to render villany more ſucceſsful and triumphant. So that *reflection* muſt mar all our ſatisfaction *here*, which the *want* of it, *alone*, can ſupply.

BUT, with reſpect to the proper and natural *unity* of *men*, and *Chriſtians* (which is founded on immutable principles of reaſon, and calculated for advancing univerſal order and happineſs) the caſe is entirely *different*. This cannot poſſibly be maintained with conſiſtency, and in its due extent, but upon *ſuch principles* only, as are, likewiſe, the direct principles of *inward happineſs*. It ſuppoſes, in the *firſt* place, pride and obſtinacy, ambition and avarice, peeviſhneſs and malice, to be *controuled* and *ſubdued*; and the inward temper reduced, to a calm ſtate of *eaſe* and *tranquility*. But this is not all: For *unity* can no where ſubſiſt, unleſs friendlineſs, love, generoſity, and a delight in the good of others, are the *actuating* and *ruling* diſpoſitions; which opens ſuch a ſcene of exalted and unſatiating *pleaſure*, that all the other gratifications, which the whole univerſe can afford, will not equal. Beſides, *our joy* is the greater, becauſe the advantages and bleſſings of mutual benevolence, and concord, are *widely diffuſed: We* are happy, in ſeeing our *fellow-creatures*, and

and *fellow-chriſtians*, happy: And of this, a perſon of a thoroughly *humane* diſpoſition, will have an *exquiſite* and *quick feeling*. So that the *Pſalmiſt*, in the paſſage above referred to, might well ſay; *behold, how pleaſant* it is, *for brethren to dwell together in unity.*

And as for the *goodneſs* of it, this, ſurely, can be as little diſputed; becauſe, as it has been ſhewn to be fit in itſelf, and agreeable to the eſtabliſhed order of things, and the unchangeable relations of reaſonable creatures, it muſt, of courſe, be *morally* good: And undeniably ſo, on this account likewiſe, that it is the only means to promote the happineſs of *mankind* in *general*, and abſolutely neceſſary to the regular ſupport, and well-being, of *all ſocieties*. Let us ſuppoſe diſcord and variance to prevail univerſally, how would the world ſubſiſt? Where could *ſocial happineſs* be found, if there was nothing but mutual jealouſy, diſtruſt, and emulation; each ſupplanting his neighbour, and providing a ſeparate gratification for himſelf? In *families*, there can be nothing but *confuſion*, while contention and diſcord reign. In *kingdoms*, faction, and the ſtrife of parties, create public *diſtreſs* and *perplexity*. And, in the *church* of *Chriſt*, the *effects* of diſſention and oppoſition, of raſh excommunications, and cauſeleſs ſchiſms, have been extremely *deplorable:* To the oppreſſion of truth and right; the making *Chriſtian* aſſemblies ſeminaries of bitterneſs and enmity; proſtituting the adorable character, of the bleſſed Saviour of mankind, to the profane ſcoffs of *atheiſts*, and *libertines*; and, in a word, almoſt to the utter extinction of every thing, but the bare name of *Chriſtianity*.

When

When the profeſſors, of this moſt holy and excellent religion, are imperious and domineering, and foment cruel and unnatural *diviſions*, when they break the *one body* of *Chriſt*, and multiply it into little *cabals*, reviling, and diſclaiming all relation to, each other; when they are *contentious*, and, without thinking of charity and moderation, engage in *violent diſputes* about the *holineſs* of days, and geſtures, and garments, and croſſings, or the *orthodoxy* of ſounds, that have no determinate *meaning*, or the ſeveral ways of *explaining*, what is allowed to be *inexplicable*; and inſtead of humility, and peace, gentleneſs, and ſimplicity of manners, the real *characters* of corrupt and degenerate *Chriſtians*, are haughtineſs, impatience of contradiction, and an implacable ſtubborn ſpirit: The cauſe of *Chriſtianity* is more dangerouſly *wounded*, by ſuch exceſſes as theſe, than by all the wit, and arguments, of its moſt ingenious and ſubtle oppoſers——And, notwithſtanding its truth and divinity, *Infidels* will load it with *contempt*; nor, indeed, can it be expected to *flouriſh*, and gain *Proſelytes*, while it is thus *diſhonoured*, and *betrayed*, by its pretended friends.

Add to this, that *diviſions*, and *animoſities*, obſtruct the increaſe of *Chriſtian knowledge*, by infuſing ſtrong prejudices, by inflaming the paſſions, and darkening the underſtanding; and by withdrawing the attention from the eſſential doctrines of the *Goſpel*, and fixing it on thoſe minute and trifling points, which are, generally, the ſubjects of moſt furious and ſcandalous debates. No leſs fatal are they to the *Chriſtian virtues* of righteouſneſs, long-ſuffering, meekneſs, fidelity, and goodneſs; which are all obliterated and effaced, in proportion to the increaſe of *diſcord* and *variance*.

Strife

STRIFE and *faction* are therefore condemned, in the New Teſtament, in the ſevereſt Terms, becauſe of their manifeſt *contrariety* to true religion, and the *Chriſtian* character, and their dreadful and deſtructive *conſequences:* And, on the contrary, the ſtricteſt *unity*, and moſt *affectionate regard* for each other, are frequently, and earneſtly, recommended. We are exhorted, to *follow after the things which make for peace* *; *to put away evil ſpeaking, wrath, anger, clamour, malice* †. And the Apoſtle *Paul*, with the moſt beautiful and pathetic tenderneſs (which ſhewed the peculiar mildneſs and benevolence of his diſpoſition) intreated the *Philippians*, if there was *any conſolation in* Chriſt, *any comfort of love, any fellowſhip of the ſpirit*, to *be like-minded, having the ſame love* [i. e. *reciprocal* and *univerſal* charity,] being *of one accord, of one mind* §; and the *Coloſſians*, to *put on* (*as the elect of* GOD, *holy and beloved*) *bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs*, and *long-ſuffering*; *forbearing one another, and forgiving one another* ‡. He reproved the *Corinthians*, for their *contentious* principles, with great ſharpneſs and ſeverity, in the following paſſage: *Whereas* there is *among you envying, and ſtrife, and diviſions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one ſaith, I am of* Paul; and another, *I am of* Apollos; *and I of* Cephas, *or* Peter; *and I of* Chriſt; *are ye not carnal? Is* Chriſt *divided? Was* Paul *crucified for you?* Or, *were ye baptiſed into the name of* Paul ‖? And, in another of his epiſtles, he enjoins it on the *Chriſtian* brethren, to *walk worthy of the vocation, wherewith* they were *called*——Becauſe there is *one body, and one ſpirit, even as* they were *called in one hope of*

* Rom. xiv. 19. † Eph. iv. 31. § Philip. ii. 1, 2.
‡ Col. iii. 12, 13, ‖ 1 Cor. i. 12, 13. Chap. iii. 3, 4.

their *calling*; *one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm*; *one* GOD, *and Father of all, who* was *above all, and through all, and in* them *all* *.

THIS is the *glorious* ſpirit, this the *divine* temper, of the *Chriſtian* religion, ſtrongly inculcated, and brightly exemplified, by the firſt preachers of it. And if the time ſhould ever come, when not only the *members* of *particular churches*, but *whole Chriſtian ſocieties*, ſhall live, in this amiable and bleſſed *concord*, one with another; nay, when, by a more extenſive benevolence and harmony than this, *all mankind* ſhall be *united* in the bonds of an undiſſembled and generous *friendſhip*; not merely, upon the conſideration of their dwelling together in neighbourhoods, and leſſer ſocieties, but as parts of the univerſal community: This will be the ſtrongeſt and moſt tranſporting reſemblance, of which we can, at preſent, form any idea of the future life; in which *ſocial affections* will be exerted, and *ſocial pleaſures* enjoyed, in their utmoſt purity and perfection. And as the introduction, the opening, and gradual eſtabliſhment, of this refined ſtate of things in this world, is an object ſo worthy our attention and purſuit: I ſhall lay down ſome directions, for the better preſerving peace amongſt inviduals, with which public peace has, and muſt always have, a ſtrict and neceſſary connection. And,

FIRST, it is abſolutely neceſſary, that we mortify all thoſe turbulent and irregular paſſions, and avoid all thoſe vices, which have a tendency to deſtroy *peace*; and are the immediate ſprings of *ſtrife*, and *variance*. *From whence*, come *wars and fightings among you* (ſays St. *James*) come they *not hence*, even *of your luſts, that war in your members* †? From a reſtleſs and impetuous

* Eph. iv. 1, 4, 5, 6. † Jam. iv. 1.

mind,

mind, a mind agitated, and inflamed, by diſorderly and ungoverned luſts, will naturally proceed *emulation* and *diſcord.*

BUT there are ſome paſſions, which have a more particular, and direct, tendency to produce theſe evils, which, therefore, we ſhould be moſt of all careful to ſuppreſs. For inſtance, it is ſo obvious an effect of *pride*, that *Solomon* ſays, *only by pride, cometh contention* *. The proud man, having an extravagant opinion of his *own merit*, will look for *uncommon reſpect* from others, and think himſelf *ſlighted*, and *affronted*, upon the moſt innocent and trivial occaſions: And hence, will ariſe *feuds*, and *conteſts*, about trifling punctilios of honour and ceremony, about rank and precedency; *real affronts*, in revenge for imaginary provocations; and, conſequently, *quarrellings*, and the utmoſt degree of *miſchief.*

AND as *pride* makes men ſet an extraordinary value upon themſelves, it makes them, likewiſe, inſolent, poſitive, and aſſuming; imperious, and domineering; and puts them on treating their fellow-creatures, with *contempt* and *diſdain.* And as all or at leaſt the greater part of, mankind *value* themſelves *ſufficiently*, and cannot *brook* being deſpiſed and degraded, or uſed as worthleſs inſignificant perſons; hence ſprings a *keen ſenſe* of abuſe and wrong, and, as the natural effect of it, *reſentment* and *indignation* againſt the offender. And I believe, if we conſult experience, we ſhall find, that as many, if not more, *differences* ariſe from this, than from any other, cauſe; which was alſo the caſe, in the more early ages of the world, according to *Solomon*'s maxim——*Caſt out the ſcorner, and contention ſhall go out, yea, ſtrife and reproach ſhall ceaſe* †.

* Prov. xiii. 10. † Ib. xxii. 10.

An exorbitant *ambition*, after power and greatneſs, is alſo a very fruitful ſource of *diſcord*. All ages, and all hiſtories, afford melancholy examples, how frequent *diſturbances* have been upon this head, and what dreadful *confuſions* it has cauſed in the world: What *convulſions* in government; what *deſolations* in the moſt rich and flouriſhing countries; what a vaſt *effuſion* of *blood*. And a deſire of *preheminence* and *ſuperiority*, in *leſſer* characters, will always occaſion, *in proportion* to the ſphere of activity, *equal* miſchiefs, as in a more *exalted* and *extenſive* capacity.

Covetousness, again, tends, naturally, to *embroil* mankind, and propagate *variance*, and *diſſention*. For if perſons are reſolved to ſtick at no methods, in order to be rich, the conſequence muſt be *fraud* and *circumvention*, *oppreſſion* and *injury*; upon which, the paſſions being exaſperated, the obligations of friendſhip cancelled, and all mutual confidence and good offices ſuſpended, nothing can be expected, but that *open hoſtility* will enſue.

To theſe let me add, as another immediate ſource of *contention*, immoderate *anger*, which tranſports men, beyond all the bounds of that *decency* and *reſpect*, which they owe to each other; and leads not only to provoking and abuſive *language*, but to the moſt outrageous *acts* of violence: By which the *peace* of families, and whole neighbourhoods, is deſtroyed, and exchanged for inveterate *malice* and *animoſity*.

I shall only mention one vice more, from which the *differences* and *bitter diſſentions*, which there are among mankind, do commonly proceed; and that is, *evil-ſpeaking*: Under which head, I rank not only virulent and opprobrious diſcourſe, and more open

open and malicious invectives, but the leſſer methods of ſcandal, and defamation. He that *whiſpers* things *ſecretly*, to the diſreputation and injury of his neighbour, that *inſinuates* dark *ſuſpicions* of ill deſigns, that *aggravates* his real faults, or *detracts* from the merit of his good actions, may be juſtly reckoned an *incendiary*; according to the wiſe obſervation of *Solomon*, That *a whiſperer ſeparateth chief friends* *. He, likewiſe, may be looked upon as a *ſower* of the ſeeds of *diſcord*, who makes it his buſineſs to carry *idle ſtories*, from one to another, of things ſaid to their prejudice; not, perhaps, from *malice*, or any direct *ill intention*, but only from the general humour of *talkativeneſs* and *impertinence*, which ſo much prevails in the world. And as it appears, that mankind, almoſt univerſally, value their reputation ſo highly, and have ſo quick a *reſentment* of every thing, that ſtains and blackens their characters, that they cannot bear the ſecret *whiſpers* of calumny, any more than *loud* and *open* defamation; this ſhews us, how neceſſary it is, in order to preſerve the *peace* of the world, that we abſtain from every thing of this kind, with the moſt exact and ſcrupulous care.

For when we ſay any thing to the *diſhonour* or *prejudice* of others, *derogatory* from their wiſdom, virtue, or from any other good quality, which they lay a great ſtreſs upon, or which, in the opinion of the world, is worthy and laudable; it matters not, whether the ſubſtance of what is related be *true*, or *falſe*; ſince it is the *aſſerting* the thing (and not the *circumſtances* of it) that gives ſo much *diſpleaſure*, and raiſes ſo high a *reſentment*. I would recommend it, therefore, as a rule very fit to be obſerved by all, who ſtudy their *own eaſe* and *quiet*, or are deſirous of *public harmony* and *concord*——to be cautious, how they meddle

* Prov. xvi. 28.

with

with any man's *character*, eſpecially with the *weak* and *defective* part of it. Praiſe his *good* qualities to the utmoſt; and ſpeak, if you pleaſe, of his *indifferent* actions; but take care, how you ſay any thing of him that is reflecting and diſhonourable, even in *private:* For if it ſhould be known (and there are a thouſand circumſtances, that may occaſion ſuch a diſcovery) it will probably offend and diſguſt him, and fix an ill impreſſion of you in his mind; the conſequence of which will be, that he will interpret, every part of your conduct, in the moſt rigorous and diſadvantageous ſenſe: And thus, by degrees, there may come to be an *avowed rupture*, and *implacable enmity*, between the moſt intimate and familiar friends.

To thoſe, which have been already ſuggeſted, it will be proper for us to add this, as another neceſſary rule, *viz.* that we ſhould abſtain carefully from every thing, whereby our corrupt paſſions will be *inflamed*; and, particularly, from all *intemperate revellings*, and *exceſſes:* For, in the midſt of theſe irregularities, men frequently give a looſe to the moſt furious *contention*, and commit the greateſt *violence* upon each other. This is very elegantly and ſtrongly deſcribed, in the book of *Proverbs*——*Who hath woe? Who hath ſorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babling? Who hath wounds without cauſe?*——*They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to ſeek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup*, when *it moveth itſelf aright. At the laſt, it biteth like a ſerpent, and ſtingeth like an adder* *.

Another rule to be obſerved, in order to promote and eſtabliſh *peace*, is this, that we be affable and obliging to all, meek

* Prov. xxiii. 29, &c.

and

and condeſcending, prudent and circumſpect in our conduct; and, particularly, that inſtead of expreſſing a diſeſteem and ſcorn of any, we ſhew them rather more reſpect than they deſerve, provided it be in ſuch inſtances, as will not gratify and ſtrengthen an ill principle of vanity, nor, conſequently, vitiate and corrupt their minds. For all men, (as I have had occaſion, more than once, to obſerve before) are, ſome way or other, perſons of importance in their own thoughts; and you may, generally ſpeaking, live *quietly* and *eaſily* with them, if you pay them a civil deference and regard: But if it appears, that they are the objects of your *contempt*, they will, in return, make you the objects of their *diſdain* and *hatred* both.

And as an *inoffenſive* and *reſpectful* carriage is neceſſary, ſo is a *frank* and *open* behaviour. For if we are *cloſe* and *reſerved*, men of ſuſpicious tempers will fancy, that we abuſe and impoſe upon them, and entertain ill deſigns, and, conſequently will view all our actions in the moſt unfavourable lights; and, being ſtrongly *prejudiced*, will be apt to *quarrel* with us, upon every imaginary provocation. Again, it is oftentimes highly expedient, that we be *gentle* and *compliable* to the humours of others, and even to their weakneſſes, and imperfections. For as there is an infinite variety, in the tempers, intereſts, and purſuits of men, ſhould every one be *ſtiff* and *inflexible*, there muſt be eternal *variance*, and *alienation* of *affection*. It is, therefore, of the utmoſt importance, if we would keep up a *good correſpondence* with our fellow-creatures, that we ſometimes favour their *weak* ſide, overlook many of their *miſtakes*, and put on that particular *good temper*, which is moſt likely to *agree* with their *bad one*: That in converſing, for inſtance, with ſuch as are perverſe and froward, we ſhow ourſelves more good-natured and obliging; to

the

the angry and paſſionate, more calm and gentle; to the poſitive and obſtinate, more modeſt and flexible.

I WOULD recommend farther, to all the lovers of *peace*, not to be forward to engage in unneceſſary *diſputes*. There are ſome caſes, in which diſputes are not only *needleſs*, becauſe they can anſwer no *good* purpoſe; but have, evidently, a very *miſchievous* and *hurtful* tendency. Thus, for example, it muſt be the utmoſt folly and imprudence, to enter into a diſpute, with a man of a *haſty* and *choleric* diſpoſition: For the paſſions, in ſuch a one, being quick and violent, will take fire at the leaſt *oppoſition*, and load the *oppoſer* himſelf with *ſcurrility* and *reproach*, inſtead of attempting to convince him, by *ſolid argument*: And this, perhaps, may *exaſperate* his paſſions likewiſe; and, by kindling *a flame*, that cannot eaſily be quenched, lay the foundation of *perpetual eſtrangement* and *injury*. Men, indeed, are ſo *warm* and *eager* in almoſt all their debates, that an *ill effect* may be, generally, apprehended. Nay, even in *diſputes* about *religion*, it is melancholy to obſerve, what *bitterneſs* is too often diſcovered; and how many, inſtead of manifeſting a ſincere and rational concern for the honour of religion, and the improvement of their own minds, evidence only this ſad truth——that they cheriſh thoſe *unruly paſſions*, which religion condemns, and are ſtrangers to that *meekneſs* and *charity*, which is an eſſential and a moſt ornamental part of it.

AND the reaſon, of theſe angry and violent proceedings, is, that men *diſpute* not for *truth*, but *victory*; not to acquire *new knowledge*, but obſtinately to maintain what they *have* already; or, at leaſt, what they *adhere to* under that character, whether, it be, in reality, *knowledge*, or *ignorance*.

NOT

NOT that I would be underſtood to diſcourage a calm and deliberate *enquiry*, and impartial *debate* about the principles of *religion*, or any other important points of knowledge: For I am perſuaded, that if men were candid and moderate, and had a due command of themſelves, theſe might anſwer very *valuable* ends. But, as they are generally managed, no wiſe man, who is *ſtudious* of *peace*, will be forward to engage in them; eſpecially, if they are about queſtions of mere ſubtilty, and dry ſpeculation, which can be of no advantage towards the juſt regulation of life and manners. For, in ſuch caſes, a *victory* cannot be any *real improvement* of the *mind*, but only the *triumph* of a *ſuperior underſtanding*: And when this is the point aimed at, the *conteſt* will probably be carried on (as about ſuperior power, and greatneſs, or any other things, which are not moral, but mere natural and external, advantages) with great *heat* and *animoſity*. St. *Paul*, therefore, informed *Timothy*, that the conſequence of ſuch altercations was, *envy*, *ſtrife*, *railings*, *evil ſurmiſings* *; and adviſed him to *avoid fooliſh and unlearned queſtions*, *knowing*, *that they gender ſtrifes* †.

FARTHER, another method, by which the *beginnings* of *much contention* may be prevented, is, for men not to be *too meddling* and *over-officious*, not to be *inquiſitive* about other peoples affairs, nor to *pry* into their ſecrets. For, by this conduct, they not only incur the cenſure of being *impertinent* and *pragmatical*, but, oftentimes, run themſelves into *quarrels* with perſons, who think that they are affronted, and injured, by ſuch a behavi-

* 1 Tim. vi. 4. † 2 Tim. ii. 23.

our: And, by being too forward to *interfere* in the management of their neighbours concerns, they render themſelves, in ſome meaſure, *accountable* for any ill turn in their affairs, and for difficulties and embarraſſments, which they may labour under.

But there is another kind of *officiouſneſs*, perhaps the moſt fooliſh and dangerous of all, and that is, *concerning* ourſelves, unneceſſarily, with other mens *differences*. If, indeed, we were deſired to interpoſe, and the parties, at variance, had an opinion of our wiſdom aud ability, to determine the points in debate, it might be an act of great *goodneſs* and *generoſity*, to uſe our utmoſt endeavours for an *amicable accommodation*: But if we thruſt ourſelves into ſuch ſcenes as theſe, without being invited, and, perhaps, without talents equal to the undertaking, we ſhall probably make *one*, if not *both*, of the parties our enemies. And therefore *Solomon*, who had a juſt knowledge, and great experience, of human nature, has very wiſely obſerved: That *he that paſſeth by*, and *medleth with ſtrife* belonging *not to him*, acts as abſurd and mad apart, as he *that taketh a dog by the ears* *.

I shall only add one direction more, in order to cruſh *ſtrife* and *contention* in its very birth, which is this, that we endeavour immediately to *reconcile* ourſelves, to any who think, that we have *offended* and *done* them *wrong*; and that, whether their ſuſpicions are juſt, or only imaginary. For a *ſenſe* of *injury*, eſpecially if it be ill-grounded, may eaſily be *removed*, at its *firſt en-*

* Prov. xxvi. 17.

trance

trance into the mind; whereas, if it be ſuffered to *fix itſelf*, it becomes as hard to be *rooted out*, as any other ſettled and inveterate prejudice. And if thoſe, who have conceived ill impreſſions of us, are ſo *rugged* and *inflexible*, as not to be wrought upon by our mildneſs and ingenuity; we may ſtill take pleaſure, in the review of our *calm* and *generous* behaviour; and leave them to anſwer for all the *guilt* of the *contention*, and the bitter *animoſities*, and *miſchiefs*, that may attend it.

UNDER the conduct of theſe rules, it ſhould be our endeavour (*if it be poſſible*) to *live peaceably with all men* *. Only, let it be conſtantly remembered, that though *peace* be, indeed, a word of a delightful ſound, though it ſtrikes agreeably, and has many charms and advantages, to *recommend* it to a wiſe man, and make him highly ſollicitous to *promote* it; yet the rectitude of our minds, the favour of GOD, and the inward ſatisfactions and joys of a good conſcience, are infinitely preferable to the *eſteem* and *friendſhip* of men; which ought, when there is a real neceſſity, to be *ſacrificed* to ſuch ſuperior, and more weighty, conſiderations. In a word therefore, in purſuance of the excellent advice of the author of the epiſtle to the *Hebrews:* Let us be careful to *follow peace with all men*; but, *ever*, with an inviolable and ultimate regard to that univerſal virtue, *and holineſs, without which, no man ſhall ſee the Lord* †.

I SHALL conclude the whole with this one remark, that a peaceful diſpoſition, and an inoffenſive behaviour, in all *private* perſons, will infallibly produce peace in *families*; that peace,

* Rom. xii. 18 † Hebr. xii. 14.

in *families*, will naturally beget peace in *neighbourhoods*, and *larger diſtricts*; that peace and unity, univerſally cultivated in *neighbourhoods*, directly tends to *political* and *civil* unity; and that the preſerving amity and concord, in all *particular religious ſocieties*, is the moſt effectual method, which it is in our power to take, to promote, and eſtabliſh, peace and order, throughout the *univerſal church* of *Chriſt*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Humility, *and* Meekneſs.

I SHALL begin, with giving a ſhort account of the true nature of *humility*; from whence it will appear, what great influence it has, upon the whole of *ſocial virtue*. And this is the more neceſſary, becauſe it has been ſo widely *miſtaken*, that this moſt excellent diſpoſition, which is the foundation and ſupport of all other virtues, has not only been of no ſervice to the intereſts of *human ſociety*, but of very *dangerous* conſequence.

LET me obſerve therefore, in the FIRST place, that *humility* does not conſiſt in thinking *worſe* of ourſelves, than we really deſerve; nor is it *pride* in any man, to reckon himſelf a *good* and *virtuous* perſon, if he truly is ſo; or to *prefer* himſelf to others, whoſe lives are evidently wicked and immoral: For this is no more, than forming a *right* judgment of things——And if he makes it the matter of his thankſgiving to almighty GOD, under a modeſt ſenſe of his imperfections, notwithſtanding his *ſuperiority* to many of his fellow-creatures, and without *inſulting* their unhappy ſtate; it is but a decent acknowledgment of the care of providence, which has the ſupreme direction, and overruling influence, in every event.

AND

And yet, many ſeem to think, that it is of the *eſſence* of *humility*, to entertain the *meaneſt* and *vileſt* opinion of themſelves, they can poſſibly form; they ſet out with this falſe principle, that they cannot *degrade* themſelves enough: And thus, they are not only deprived of that ſatisfaction and comfort, which are the natural reward of their integrity; but proceed ſo far, as to make it one principal part of the character of a *ſaint*, to think, and ſpeak, ſuch *ill things* of himſelf, as, if true, would infallibly prove him to be *in the* very *gall of bitterneſs, and the bond of iniquity* *.

Such apprehenſions, as theſe, muſt neceſſarily weaken all the ties of *moral goodneſs*, as, in their conſequences, they plainly repreſent him to be the moſt *religious*, who is, in his true character, the *worſt* of men; and ſuppoſe, that the *virtues* of *ſociety*, inſtead of being neceſſary offices of true religion, are, both with reſpect to the inward diſpoſition, and the outward act, things, that a *humble* pious *Chriſtian* may be wholly deſtitute of: And they are attended with this additional ill conſequence; that as men are, generally, apt to judge of others by themſelves, they will naturally think the whole race of mankind, to whom their *ſocial duties* are to be paid, to be a ſet of ſuch *vile miſcreants* as cannot, reaſonably, be deemed worthy of their eſteem and friendſhip.

Again, another very miſchievous and *unſocial* deſcription of *humility* is, to make it conſiſt in deſpiſing and vilifying *reaſon*, and in repreſenting *religion* as not the matter of our deliberate

* Acts viii. 23.

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conviction, and free choice: For this is, in effect, deſtroying all the boundaries of *right* and *wrong*; and making the very notion of *virtue*, and *vice*, an abſolute contradiction. The ſame may be ſaid, of all thoſe accounts of the duty of *humility*, which diſhonour *human nature*, by repreſenting it as a monſtrous compoſition of *ſpleen*, *meanneſs* of ſpirit, and of all other *baſe* and *ungenerous* diſpoſitions, which naturally tend to *oppoſe* the *good* of mankind; and which, if it was the true ſtate of the caſe, would furniſh a plauſible *excuſe*, for the vices of the *ſenſual*, the *proud*, the *cruel*, from the neceſſary malignity, and depravation, of human nature: Of thoſe accounts, likewiſe, which teach *Chriſtian humility* to undervalue and diſgrace *morality*, and, by neceſſary conſequence, all the *ſocial* virtues.——I do not pretend to aſſert, that with thoſe who eſpouſe, and zealouſly propagate, ſuch principles as theſe, they have this *real effect*, *viz.* to prevent their being *meek*, and *beneficent*, and *true lovers* of mankind; but only, that this is their direct and natural *tendency*, though it may be obſtructed, in particular inſtances, by other accidental cauſes. Having thus guarded againſt ſome groſs miſtakes, and ſhewn, that the three laſt mentioned, no more belong to the duty of *humility*, than, I had proved before, they did to *Chriſtian ſelf-denial*; I proceed to explain, more directly, wherein *true humility* conſiſts; and ſhall,

First, conſider it as an *inward principle*, as the *temper* and *habit* of the mind. In this view, it implies a general knowledge of human nature, and juſt apprehenſions concerning it——That we are truly ſenſible of the *limitation* of its faculties, and the *imperfection* of its knowledge and goodneſs; which will ſuppreſs *haughtineſs* and *arrogance*, vices, that are highly detrimental to the *peace* and *order* of ſociety. True humility teaches us, to conſider

conſider ourſelves as beings of a *mixed* make; compounded of underſtanding, and appetite, or, in other words, of an intelligent, and ſenſitive, nature: Who, with reſpect to the inferior part, are nearly *allied* to creatures *below* us, and whoſe intellectual capacities are *narrow* and *confined:* That we have many deſires, which we cannot *ſatisfy*; are preſſed with wants, which we cannot *relieve*; and *liable* to numberleſs cares, croſſes, and diſappointments. This is the real ſtate of things: And therefore human nature, in the *general* conſideration of it, can make but a *lowly* appearance in the eyes of humble and impartial minds, if compared with the *various orders* of *rational* beings, which may be conceived to be above it; but, eſpecially, with the abſolutely perfect *Creator* of all things. And theſe, ſurely, are ſentiments, which muſt, in the ſtrongeſt manner, enforce *every ſocial virtue:* While the contrary diſpoſitions of *pride*, and *high-mindedneſs*, tend utterly to efface the impreſſions of *modeſty*, *juſtice*, and *humanity*.

But beſides entertaining this lowly opinion of human nature in general, it is neceſſary, that we ſhould think rightly of *ourſelves*, as *individuals* in the ſpecies of mankind; and of *the rank* we bear, in human nature: For we plainly ſee, that it is not *equal* in all; but that, in different men, it is *more*, or *leſs*, perfect: So that if *all* were to judge of *themſelves*, as they do of human nature in its higheſt advancement, they muſt judge contrary to *truth* and *right*; which are the ground of *humility*, as well as of every other *ſocial* obligation. It is, therefore, indiſpenſably neceſſary, in order to our maintaining a *humble* frame and temper of mind, that we form a *juſt eſtimate* of our ſeveral endowments; not *arrogating* any, that do not belong to us, nor *over-rating* thoſe, which we may fairly

ly claim: That we be duly conſcious of our *defects*, as well as modeſtly ſenſible of our *excellencies:* That we neither *magnify* our intellectual and moral qualifications; nor lay *too great a ſtreſs* on ſtrength, or beauty, or any other bodily accompliſhments; nor be puffed up to *high* and *extravagant* conceits, to *inſolence*, or *contempt* of others, by riches and honours; which are advantages merely external and accidental. And the conſequence of this correct and impartial idea, of the weakneſs of human nature in general, and of our own faculties in particular, will be a *teachable* diſpoſition, ready to receive inſtruction, and follow the guidance of any clearer and fuller light, than we at preſent enjoy; and, as the effect of this, a conſtant *aſpiring* after a more improved ſtate of knowledge, and virtue.

And, finally, it is abſolutely neceſſary to the attainment of true *humility*, that we *conform* our *temper* to our ſtate and circumſtances, and *confine* ourſelves, as much as poſſible, within the compaſs of our *natural wants*, and *deſires*; neither indulging to an unbounded avarice, and thirſt for riches; nor to an exorbitant ambition after worldly diſtinction and grandeur. To this purpoſe, the words of *David* are very ſtrong and pertinent, when he gives this deſcription of his own character——*Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exerciſe myſelf in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely, I have behaved and quieted myſelf, as a child that is weaned of his mother; my ſoul is even as a weaned child**. And our Saviour has repreſented our duty to us, under the ſame emblem. For when his diſciples warmly debated that queſtion among themſelves, *who* of them ſhould be *the greateſt*, in the temporal glo-

* Pſalm cxxxi 1, 2.

rious kindom of the *Meſſiah*, and appealed to him for the determination of it——*He called a little child unto him, and ſet him in the midſt of them, and ſaid; Verily I ſay unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whoſoever, therefore, ſhall humble himſelf as this little child, the ſame is greateſt in the kingdom of heaven* *.

THUS have I given a ſhort deſcription of the excellent virtue of *humility*, ſo far as it is an internal principle, and a law to the mind. And this inward temper, as it will neceſſarily inſpire all that humble reverence and ſubmiſſion, which are ſo evidently due to the ſupreme authority, wiſdom, and univerſal providence of GOD; will, as certainly, produce the ſtrict and conſtant exerciſe of all the *offices* of *ſocial virtue*, that are required in human life. Its direct, and almoſt neceſſary, tendency is to teach, and impreſs, a juſt *reſpect* to our *ſuperiours*, and a becoming *acknowledgment* of that ſuperiority, of whatever kind it be; whether it be a ſuperiority of *wiſdom*, *goodneſs*, *rank*, as this laſt is marked out to us, either by the more immediate order of nature, or the juſt eſtabliſhments of civil ſociety. It will as neceſſarily direct us to *pay* the *ſame regard* to our *equals*, as we *claim* from them, and to allow them all the *advantages*, that we ourſelves can rationally deſire; and inſtead of *aſſuming*, rather to wave our *pretenſions*, and yield the outward ſhew of *ſuperiority*, as a natural means to promote, and propagate, mutual benevolence and friendſhip. And upon the ſame general foundation in nature, and the reaſon of the thing, it muſt dictate, with reſpect to thoſe in *lower ſtations* of life,

* Mat. xviii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

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the utmoſt *gentleneſs*, *courteſy*, *condeſcenſion*, and *compaſſion:* Becauſe *all* mankind belong to one claſs of beings; and becauſe a ſuperiour *genius*, and ſuperiour *virtues*, may be covered under low and deſpicable appearances, which would perhaps have made a great figure, and have attracted the higheſt admiration and eſteem, had they been drawn out of their *obſcurity*.

HUMILITY, indeed, neither allows of *fawning*, and *flattery*, and a baſe ſervile *ſubmiſſion* to the will of ſuperiours; nor does it encourage ſuch indiſcreet and familiar *condeſcenſions*, to perſons in an inferior ſtate, as tend to bring us into contempt. On the contrary, it only ſuppoſes this plain truth, which the common underſtanding of mankind muſt readily admit; *viz.* that we can maintain all the neceſſary *decencies* of life, and the *deference* due to our particular characters, without *ſternneſs* and *arrogance*, and a ſupercilious ſcornful treatment of any, whom providence, for wiſe reaſons, has placed in a ſtate of ſubordination, with reſpect to outward rank, and offices of life. Thus it appears, that *humility*, how properly ſoever it may be conſidered, as *a part* of the inward *diſcipline*, and *government*, of a man's ſelf, is, likewiſe, inſeparably connected with *ſocial virtue*; both as *a baſis*, on which it will be more firmly ſupported; and as, in many very important inſtances, it *regulates* its equal and juſt *proportions*.

BUT the excellency of *virtues* is, oftentimes, more ſtrongly illuſtrated, by expoſing the depravity, and pernicious conſequences, of their *contrary vices:* I ſhall therefore enlarge my reflections farther on this ſubject, and conſider *pride* in its manifeſt *contrariety* to human nature, regarded either as *rational*, *animal*, *moral*, or *ſocial*. The ſubject, on which I am now briefly

to diſcourſe, is moſt expreſſively ſtated by the ſon of *Syrach*, in this beautiful aphoriſm——*Pride was not made for men* *.

To begin with his *intellectual* capacities; what foundation do theſe afford for *haughtineſs* and vain *oſtentation?* Why, ſcarce ſo much, as will give it even a plauſible colour, or ſuggeſt the leaſt tolerable excuſe for it. For, though it muſt be owned indeed, that they are an eminent *prerogative*, and a diſtinguiſhing *excellence*, in human nature, when they are compared with the *mere inſtincts* of inferiour creatures; yet, in themſelves, they yield the ſtrongeſt arguments for *humility*.

For (to enlarge a little, on what I have before juſt mentioned in general) theſe *boaſted* faculties of the human mind are, in the *firſt* place, very *narrow* and *limited*. The ſenſitive part confines their operation within a *little compaſs*; and obſtructs their clear and vigorous *exerciſe*. Innumerable objects lie quite out of their *reach:* And, of others, the reaſon of man diſcovers only the *outſide*; and, of conſequence, can form no more than *general* and *imperfect* ideas. It is ſoon puzzled, and loſt in darkneſs, for want of comprehending the *cauſes* of things: It is frequently embarraſſed with *difficulties*, and *objections* againſt the plaineſt truths, which it cannot thoroughly remove: And having, in many uſeful branches of reaſoning, but few *certain principles* to proceed upon, the concluſions, which it forms, are rather built on *preſumption*, and probable *conjecture*, than on ſolid and indubitable proofs.

* Eccluſ. x. 18.

And

AND yet, ſo weak and limited as our intellectual faculties are, they *open* but *ſlowly:* A conſiderable part of life is loſt, before they are *fitted* to exert themſelves to great advantage: And it is ſcarce ever, without a tender care and diſcreet management, and an exact and ſkilfull culture, that they are brought to *maturity*. The *natural capacity* may be *good*; but if it be not *furniſhed* with good principles, and *directed* to a right train of thinking, it will be very far from making any *eminent figure*. It is much more likely to be *loſt* in error, or *depreſſed* by indolence; or, at beſt, to gather up, only, a few *looſe*, *crude*, *undigeſted* notions; ſufficient to produce, and cheriſh, vanity and ſelf-conceit, but of very little ſignificancy, towards enlightening the judgment, and enriching the mind with ſubſtantial and uſeful knowledge.

ADD to all this, that the knowledge which the mind of man is capable of, however, upon the whole, minute and ſuperficial, confuſed and partial, is acquired by *laborious reſearches*, *cloſe application*, and a *ſlow tedious progreſs:* Which, evidently, demonſtrates the *low ſtate* of our reaſon. And this reaſon, which is by nature ſo narrow and ſhort-ſighted, is unhappily more cramped and darkened, by a vaſt variety of *prejudices*; ſome of which *inſenſibly* miſlead and pervert it. Prejudices of *education* enſlave the underſtanding: Particular *affections*, *attachments*, and *intereſts*, give it a wrong biaſs: *Falſe lights* dazzle it: And *error itſelf*, ſpeciouſly repreſented, and dreſſed in artificial deluſive colourings, is frequently impoſed upon it for *truth*; *folly* for *wiſdom*; nay, ſometimes, *vice* for *virtue*.

AND, now, can we think, that theſe are intellectual endowments, which it is *decent* for us to be *proud* of? Are

ſelf-

ſelf-conceit and *high-mindedneſs* proper for *man*, in this *infant-ſtate* of his reaſon, which is ſo dull in apprehending, and ſo erroneous in judging; ſo eaſily confounded, bribed, awed, entangled; which furniſhes us with ſo little certain knowledge; and is entirely unacquainted with the far greater part of the univerſe? It is, certainly, moſt immoderate and unnatural *vanity*, to be elated to high conceits on account of *that*, which has ſo many, and ſuch obvious, *imperfections* attending it: And nothing can ſet mankind, in a more *abſurd* and *diminutive* point of view; or be a more unanſwerable demonſtration of the *weakneſs* of that reaſon, which they are ſo apt to magnify, and glory in. Our reaſon, indeed, is to be highly *valued*, as a *rule* of moral truth, and as affording many plain and eaſy *directions*, for the conduct and general occurrences of life, both civil and religious; and as it is capable of making very conſiderable *diſcoveries*, with reſpect to the laws of nature, and the conſtitution and order of the viſible world. But while we admire, and are thankful for, its *uſes* and *excellencies*, it is equally *fit*, that we be modeſtly ſenſible of its *defects*; that we do not encourage it to *graſp* at every thing, and *decide* on points, that are beyond the ſphere of its operation: We ſhould never forget our *ſtation* in the univerſe, and the *rank* we hold, in the *ſcale* of rational beings.

THUS it appears that *pride was not made for* rational *man*. It will be found to be much more *incongruous* to his character, if we deſcend lower, and conſider him in his *inſtincts* and *paſſions*, and the whole apparatus of his *animal* frame: Which are univerſally allowed to be, and indeed bear upon them moſt evident marks of, a lower and leſs excellent compoſition. His *paſſions* are apt to be violent and impetuous; and, unleſs they are corrected by conſtant care, and a regular diſcipline, will cloud the underſtand-

ſtanding, and deſtroy its ſtrength and influence. They make him capricious and whimſical, furious and intractable. It is frequently attended with difficulty and uneaſineſs, to *provide* for the *gratification* of them, within the bounds of *virtue* and *innocence*: And their *exceſſes* torment him. They are ſometimes ſo *inconſiſtent*, as to diſtract his mind, and ſuſpend his reſolution, by keeping it divided between different objects: As a neceſſary conſequence of which, they muſt render him unfit, for a diſcreet and vigorous diſcharge of the *duties* of his *ſocial character*, and the *offices* both of a *ſpeculative*, and *active*, life. And whatever his *ſelf-love* and *partiality* may ſuggeſt, to flatter him into a *vain opinion* of his native worth and dignity, from the conſideration of the *nobler* faculties of his mind——as to the *inferiour* principles in his conſtitution, it cannot be diſputed, but that (as has been already hinted) he is nearly allied to the *brute* creation; with only this difference, which is entirely to his *diſadvantage*, that with regard to ſtrength, and other bodily accompliſhments, they have the *preheminence*; and are expoſed to *fewer* infirmities and diſorders; and thoſe not *aggravated* by ſpleen and diſcontent, by remorſe for an imprudent, or vicious, behaviour, or gloomy preſages of many dreadful, though imaginary, *conſequences*, which render the weight, of the preſent affliction, much more grievous and inſupportable. So that the whole *animal* frame, in every view of it, affords *mortifying* reflections; and is a ſcene of *humiliation*, very proper to be often repreſented to our minds, in order, thoroughly, to extirpate all the ſeeds of *arrogance* and *pride*.

To conclude this head, man is a being, in innumerable inſtances, *impotent* and *defenceleſs*, liable to many calamities, which he cannot *foreſee*, nor, conſequently, *guard* againſt, and to others, which,

which, if he could foreſee, it would not be in his power to *prevent*——Even to ſuch unfortunate revolutions and croſs events, as may efface his hopes, and overturn his moſt promiſing ſchemes, of ſelf-enjoyment. He is ſo far from being ſufficient, *alone*, for his own happineſs, that he depends upon the *help* of *others*, for moſt of the common pleaſures and advantages of life——and, eſpecially, for his knowledge, the *right turn* of his mind, his *virtues*, which may be, in a great meaſure, owing to their inſtructions, and good example, and the care they have uſed, in conducting, and preſcribing to him, in his firſt injudicious and unexperienced years; for his *health*, likewiſe, which is preſerved, or reſtored, by their advice, or charitable aſſiſtance; for *preſervations* from danger, and the *eaſy* and *flouriſhing* ſtate of his affairs, which may be owing to their affection and fidelity. And therefore, as the reſult of all this, *humility*, which is a virtue immediately founded on a *right knowledge* of human nature, forcibly dictates this momentous *ſocial* truth, the foundation of *all offices* in *ſociety* without exception; *viz.* that were men to ſtand *ſingle*, and without a mutual *communion* and *intercourſe* of kind and friendly actions, they would be much more *helpleſs* than inferiour animals, as their wants are more numerous: And, eſpecially, as the tenderneſs and infirmity, of their infant-ſtate, is of much longer continuance, their *diſtreſs* muſt, of neceſſity, be the more deplorable. This is, undoubtedly, a wiſe law of nature, ſince mankind are deſigned for *ſocial* converſes and duties; have peculiar *principles*, and *affections*, in their nature, directing, and ſtrongly tending, to ſuch employments as theſe; and the faculty of *ſpeech*, to be the inſtrument of commerce in *ſociety*: While the *brutes* are *deſtitute* of the one; and therefore it is, that, to all rational and generous purpoſes, they are *incapable* of the other.

But

BUT it may be ſaid, that the *natural ſtate* of *man* may be *raiſed* and *refined*, by the cultivations of art and induſtry——Let us, therefore, proceed the next ſtep, and conſider him in his higheſt *improvements*; and ſee, whether thus adorned, and appearing in his utmoſt glory and perfection, it becomes him to diſcard *humility*. The *nobleſt* and moſt *ſhining* improvements, that human nature is capable of, are either of the *intellectual*, or *moral*, kind; or, in other words, improvements in *knowledge*, and *virtue*. For as to *refinements* in luxury, in awkwardneſs and extravagance of dreſs, and the arts of furniſhing out new, and various, ſcenes of genteel impertinence and debauchery; as for *theſe*, I ſay, together with the dark *intrigues*, *evaſions*, and *ſubtilties*, of a diſhoneſt policy: I can, by no means, look upon them as improvements, which are at all to the *honour* of mankind, or which, upon a juſt eſtimate, and where there is a right notion of things, can excite any but uneaſy and *debaſing* reflections. The *other* I ſhall diſtinctly, but briefly, conſider, in order to ſhew, that, though they are a natural and proper foundation of *ſelf-eſteem*, they afford no excuſe for *pride* or *oſtentation*.

FOR, *firſt*, let it be conſidered, that even *thoſe deciſions* of reaſon, which we look upon to be clear and certain, are frequently erroneous, and either the *principles*, it argues from, are too haſtily aſſumed, or the *concluſions*, it draws, fallacious and ſophiſtical. Again, a *great part* of what remains, of the *boaſted* and *celebrated* human knowledge, goes no further than the *ſurfaces* of things, without penetrating into their *inward compoſition*, or thoroughly underſtanding their *properties*. There are inexplicable *myſteries*, in almoſt all the objects we converſe with. Nay, we are *confounded*, when we look into *ourſelves*,

and can give very little *ſatisfactory* account of our own *complex* frame; nor comprehend the *manner*, in which the thinking principle is united with the material, animates the corporeal ſyſtem, and commands and regulates its motions.

And if we know ſo very little even of thoſe objects, with which we are moſt *intimately* and *familiarly* acquainted, it is no wonder, that our conceptions are ſo ſhort and dark, with regard to others, that are *remote* from us: And that, after having made the higheſt proficiency, and with the utmoſt efforts of the moſt enlarged and active genius, there is no more *inſight* gained into futurity; no more *adequate comprehenſion* of the works of nature, in their immenſe extent, variety, ſtructure, and uſes; that every thing *ſtill* ſurprizes us; and the more we examine, we find, *behind*, greater matter for wonder and curioſity; and, in a word, that we diſcern *diſtinctly*, and can ſpeak *intelligibly*, but of a *very few* of the operations of divine wiſdom, while *infinitely* more is concealed from our enquiries, and wrapped up, at preſent, in thick impenetrable darkneſs. All this is no real *diſgrace* to us, nor the leaſt diminution of the *true honour* of our nature; which, notwithſtanding the limitation of its faculties with reſpect to the *whole*, is, in *its kind*, *perfect*. But if, with ſuch mixtures of error, and confuſion in our beſt reaſonings, and when we are ignorant of infinitely more, than we can pretend, with any tolerable exactneſs, to underſtand, we are puffed up with *ſelf-conceit*, and *inſolently* boaſt of our knowledge; ſuch imprudent, and ridiculous, *affectation* muſt repreſent the ſhortneſs of our views, and the narrowneſs of our intellectual capacities, in a *meaner* and more *abject* light. And thus, what is, in itſelf, only our *misfortune*, for which no generous being, of a ſuperior rank, would *inſult* us, is converted into a *juſt object* of *contempt*.

In

In ſtrict propriety, the moſt applauded *wiſdom* of mankind is *relative*, and *comparative*, only. In reſpect of the creatures *below* him, who diſcover ſcarce *any*, and thoſe but *rude* and *unconnected*, ſketches of reaſon, *man* may fairly lay *claim*, to a character for knowledge and judgment: And *compared* with many of their own ſpecies, whoſe faculties are neglected and uncultivated, *ſome perſons* of diſtinguiſhed abilities, and extraordinary application, may be ſtiled *eminently wiſe*. And they, who thus *excel*, may be ſenſible of their ſuperiority in both theſe kinds, without the imputation of *pride* and *arrogance*. But notwithſtanding——What may be ſtiled wiſdom, in this *comparative* view, may, *in itſelf*, be a very weak and ſuperficial comprehenſion of things. The *eminent degrees* of knowledge for *a man* may be, in many inſtances, childiſh ſpeculation, and mixed with a much larger proportion of ignorance. And that our improvements in this way are, in reality, very *low* and *inconſiderable*, we ſhall ſoon be convinced, if we reflect coolly and impartially, how much *more refined* and *enlarged* ſentiments, we ourſelves can imagine, ſome ſuperior beings may be capable of; in compariſon of *whom*, *we* may make, at leaſt, as mean and trifling a a figure in the rational world, as the very *loweſt* of mankind do, in compariſon of the *higheſt*. But nothing will ſo thoroughly depreſs the *inſolence*, and *oſtentation*, of human wiſdom, as to *compare* it with that of the infinite mind, who comprehends, at one view, not only the actual exiſtences, but all the poſſibilities of things; and has diſcovered ſuch a profuſion of exquiſite ſkill, in the minuteſt of his works, as the united reaſon of all mankind cannot equal, nor imitate, nor even juſtly, and fully, explain.

But if the *intellectual* improvements of man are ſo defective, that a juſt reflection will deduce, from thence, arguments for *humility*, and not for *pride*; is there not more colour of reaſon, is there not a ſtronger temptation, for him to be *vain* of his *moral*; which are the rectitude and chief dignity of his, and of every intelligent, nature? I anſwer, that there are ſeveral things, which prove beyond all contradiction, that a too *high opinion* of himſelf, on account of his *goodneſs*, is altogether as unbecoming his character, as groſs and inexcuſeable an exceſs, as to be *over-conceited* of his *wiſdom*.

For it often happens, that a great deal of *his virtue* is only conſtitutional, the impulſe, and almoſt irreſiſtible tendency, of his natural diſpoſition; and, ſo far, it can have no more proper *merit* in it, or claim to a *reward*, than his being originally formed a man. And conſidering the *imperfection* of all real genuine virtue, and how far it falls ſhort of the *ſublimity*, and *purity*, with which we may ſuppoſe it to be exerciſed, by ſome ſuperior beings; conſidering, how far it is *debaſed* by oſtentation, and the deſire of popularity, and that, in the *beſt* characters, it does not *always ſpring* from its right principles, but is *mixed* with ſome meaner and more ſordid view, and *alloyed* by defects, that in part obſcure its luſtre, and deprave its worth; conſidering, likewiſe, how often it is *interrupted*, and *diverted* from an uniform and ſteady courſe, by irregular paſſions, and that the moſt *perfect* are chargeable with *this guilt* at leaſt, that they have ſcarce, in any inſtance, cultivated their moral powers to *that degree*, to which they were capable of being raiſed, and improved: I ſay, if we reflect on all theſe particulars, to which others might, doubtleſs, be added, we ſhall ſee abundant reaſon to conclude, that

that *pride* is a monſtrous ingredient, even in the moſt *exalted* characters, and *blemiſhes* their native excellence; and that a *humble modeſt* temper, and conduct, are abſolutely neceſſary to make them *finiſhed* characters, and give them a diſtinguiſhed *gracefulneſs* and *luſtre*.

ADD to this, that what we may call, by way of diſtinction, a *religious pride* (though the things indeed are, in themſelves, ſtrangely inconſiſtent) is apt to *arrogate*, and *confine*, all that is worthy and valuable to itſelf: And thoſe, who are infected with *this kind* of *pride*, being raviſhed with the ſingular beauties of their own pretended holineſs, will be induced, too eaſily, to look upon others as *defiled*, and *unfit* for their ſpiritual converſation; and to keep at *a diſtance* from them, as if they feared, that their own refined and perfect virtue would be corrupted and blaſted by their groſſer impurities. They generally affect to be *retired* within themſelves, to gain the reputation of men *abſtracted* from the world, and engaged in cloſe and conſtant *communion* with GOD: And, by this means, it is ſcarce poſſible, but they muſt contract a ſpirit *averſe* to *ſociety*, and to all the *communicative* and *generous offices* of it; and, in the end, a ſettled habit of *rudeneſs* and *ill-manners*.

AND now, if *pride* be *not made* for the *wiſe* man, nor for the *virtuous* man; it muſt be extremely *unſuitable* to him, who has no *other deſert* to plead, but his outward *honours*, and the advantages of his *ſituation* and *fortune*. For all theſe external *trappings*, and *decorations*, of life, may be the effect of chance; of wrong judgment; of fancy, and partiality; or ſpring, at firſt, from baſeneſs of temper, and ſucceſsful wickedneſs. But how-

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ever they are *acquired*, and *conveyed* to the immediate poſſeſſor, they can add nothing to his true worth, which is entirely *intrinſical*; independent on titles, and arbitrary marks of dignity; independent on the favour of princes, on the giddy applauſes of the multitude, or on any accidents, and the revolutions, in the courſe of human affairs.

If a man be really illuſtrious, on account of his own *uncommon merit*, and, conſequently, his outward diſtinctions *become* him, and ſit *naturally*, *gracefully*, and *eaſily* upon him, he may *reſpect* himſelf, and be *pleaſed* with his condition; and inſpired with a *laudable ambition*, to ſupport, in a right manner, the *greatneſs* of it. But what, even upon this ſuppoſition, has he to be *proud* of? If not of his *intellectual* and *moral* accompliſhments, (as has been already ſhewn) moſt ſurely, not of his *temporary honours*, which may fall, indiſcriminately, to the ſhare of the moſt worthleſs and undeſerving. And as, amidſt the largeſt acceſſion of *wealth*, and in the moſt *exalted* ſtation, he muſt (as has been already hinted to be the caſe of all mankind) *depend* on ſome of the very *loweſt* of his ſpecies, for aſſiſtance and defence, and for many of the chief conveniences, and comforts, of his preſent being; this ſhould effectually ſuppreſs every inclination to *inſolence*, and *proud contempt* of his inferiors: Who enjoy, *equally* with himſelf, the *greateſt* of all *honours*, of which the nature of man is ſuſceptible, *viz.* that of *deriving* their frame from the univerſal *father of ſpirits*, and of being *formed* after *his image*. This laſt branch of *pride*, which I have been conſidering, is what St. *John* ſtiles, with a particular emphaſis, *the pride of life**; and it is, by far, the moſt *impertinent*, *ſenſeleſs*,

* 1 John ii. 16.

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and *inſulting*, of all that have been mentioned, and argues a moſt *narrow*, *contracted*, and *unſocial* mind.

Upon the whole, let us be perſuaded, by what has been now offered, to mortify every ſpecies, every degree, of *pride*, which has been ſhewn to be a *monſtrous* excreſcence in human nature, and moſt *unbecoming* the character of *a man*, in every circumſtance, in which we can poſſibly place him; which aggravates the *guilt* of his evil actions, and debaſes, and leſſens, the *merit* of his good ones. A *proud* mans injuries and oppreſſions, being mixed with ſcorn and inſult, are *doubly criminal*; and his favours loſe the greateſt part of their *value*, by the diſagreeable manner of their being conferred. Acts of beneficence almoſt ceaſe to be virtues *in him*, and demand but ſmall returns, of praiſe and gratitude, *from others*.

On the contrary, *humility* is one of the moſt ornamental, and uſeful, branches of moral excellence: And, taken in its juſt *latitude*, is inſeparably connected with profound and ſubmiſſive *reverence* of God, and all the various offices of *kindneſs*, *gentleneſs*, and *condeſcenſion* to men. Let us therefore cultivate, to the utmoſt, this amiable *diſpoſition*; which is ſo *agreeable* to our limited and dependent ſtate, to the original conſtitution, and preſent circumſtances, of human nature. And, as ſo many moſt weighty and powerful motives to it, let us conſider, that it is, in itſelf, a *calm*, *compoſed*, and *placid* temper, the true ſource of ſelf-enjoyment; and utterly inconſiſtent with *envy* and *revenge*, and every other rough, boiſterous, and diſquieting *paſſion*—— That, as it is *a conformity* to his own ſcheme of things, and to the viſible deſign of his providence, it muſt procure for us the

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peculiar *approbation*, and *eſteem*, of the GOD of *nature*, our ſupreme ruler and judge——And, finally, that it is an eſſential *preparation*, for our living hereafter in that ſuperior glorious world, where the *proud* will find no employment; where each will know *his place*, and the *reſpect due* to others of the bleſſed inhabitants; where civil *titles*, and the rules of *precedency* obſerved among men, will be entirely laid aſide, as *too low* for ſuch an improved and perfect ſtate; and nothing will be eſteemed a greater honour, or a brighter mark of diſtinction, than the *ornament* of a *gentle* and *humble ſpirit*. And nothing can ſet, in a clearer light, the cloſe affinity, which *humility* bears to all the *ſocial virtues*, than this, *viz.* its being a *neceſſary diſpoſition* for enjoying the honours, and pleaſures, of the moſt *exalted ſocial* ſtate of human nature; when, in the language of *Heathen* philoſophy, we ſhall be joined to *Socrates*, *Plato*, and all the great *ſages*, wiſe *lawgivers*, and *virtuous characters*, of antiquity——but, in the language of the *Goſpel*, which is vaſtly more extended and forcible,——*to the ſpirits of* all *the juſt made perfect*, *to an innumerable company of Angels*, *to* Jeſus, *the mediator of the new covenant*, *and to* GOD the everlaſting *Father*, and impartial *Judge*, *of all* *. The *firſt* of theſe, it muſt be allowed, is a *claſſical* expreſſion, and is likely, upon that account only, to find peculiar favour in the preſent age; but the *latter*, I make no doubt, that *Longinus* himſelf (who has celebrated *Moſes*'s account of *the creation*) would, if he had an opportunity of comparing the paſſages together, pronounce to be the *true ſublime*.

* Hebr. xii. 22, 23, 24.

WITH

With reſpect to *meekneſs*, after what has been ſo largely diſcourſed, concerning the true nature of *humility*, I need ſay but little: The two virtues are in many points, in a great meaſure, *coincident*; and the former may, perhaps, be not unfitly conſidered, as a *branch* of the latter. I ſhall therefore conclude this chapter, with the following brief remarks. *Firſt*, that the virtue of *meekneſs* does not denote a *tame puſillanimous* temper, that has not reſolution enough, to aſſert its natural and juſt rights—— That it is not an *indolent* temper, unconcerned about the general ſtate of the world, and its own ſituation and character in it—— Nor is it an *over-awed*, *timorous*, and *depreſſed* ſpirit——But it ſtands *oppoſed* to diſcontent and diſquietude, to pride and turbulence of ſpirit, to intemperate exceſſes of paſſion and anger, and, finally, to extremes of reſentment, and a boiſterous revengeful diſpoſition.

And from hence it undeniably appears, that *meekneſs* is of very great importance among the *ſocial virtues*. For though it be not, itſelf, the principle, that *directly prompts* to offices of goodneſs, though it be not direct *benevolence*, and *ſympathy*, of ſoul; yet it *ſuppreſſes* thoſe inflamed and peeviſh paſſions, which are the *natural enemies* to *mercy*: And is therefore the proper *introduction*, the proper *ſchool* of *imitation* and *diſcipline*, for the *culture* of this more advanced and glorious virtue. *Meekneſs* ſtills the *hurtful*, *mercy* animates and employs the more and *generous* and *uſeful*, affections: Meekneſs *compoſes*, that mercy may *ſoften*: So that, upon the whole, it may be ſaid, that all, which *meekneſs*, in its particular nature, is deficient in, *mercy perfects*. The one is the *preparation*, the other the *actual diſpoſition*, for relieving diſtreſs, and promoting the univerſal good of mankind.

But if *humility* and *meekneſs* are conſidered as *diſtinct*, there will ſtill be an inviolable *connection*, between all the three virtues——As *humility*, by the ſenſe it has of its own weakneſs and imperfection, and from a conſciouſneſs of the innumerable failings, and indiſcretions, of human nature, muſt naturally produce *meekneſs*; and *meekneſs* beget *mercy*.

OFFICES

OFFICES

OF

DEVOTION,

Suited to the

PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS,

Treated upon in the foregoing

DISCOURSES.

Offices of Devotion, &c.

On man's natural power to find out God.

ETERNAL and ſovereign Spirit,——who art the light and life of the world; we cannot but eſteem it an eminent diſtinction, which thou haſt conferred upon our nature, that we are capable of knowing thee, the centre of all perfection, and the ſource of all good. Thy works, O God, are immenſe, full of wonder, and demanding everlaſting praiſe. And to vary the ſcenes of exiſtence, for the largeſt and moſt diffuſive communication, of good, thou haſt been pleaſed to form innumerable other beings, beſides mankind, endued with life and ſenſe; who, through the imperfection of their make, can neither *diſcern* thy power which upholds, thy preſence which animates, nor thy kind and gracious influence, that chears and comforts their frame.

But thou haſt planted a *ſpirit* in man, to which thine almighty inſpiration hath given ſuperior meaſures of underſtanding. And we pray,——that this nobleſt part of our compoſition may never ſink ſo far below its dignity, and the end of its peculiar creation,

creation, that it may never fall into ſuch a ſtate of error and wretchedneſs, as to be *alienated* from thy ſervice and honour. Fix in us a ſteady conviction, that from our natural capacity of knowing thee, our moſt *refined* pleaſures, and ſureſt ſupports ſpring; and that theſe, while we are fitly diſpoſed to receive and enjoy them, and thou, O GOD, who inhabiteſt eternity, continueſt to exiſt, can never fail. Impreſs theſe thoughts ever upon our minds,——that all virtue, by reſulting from thine *all-wiſe conſtitution* of nature, is more firmly eſtabliſhed, as an univerſal and unalterable tie; that its beauty and excellence are more clearly illuſtrated, and its authority more ſtrongly inforced, by its being a *law* of thy *ſupreme government*; and that all power, honour, order, every thing great and good, every thing lovely and deſirable, are contained in, and muſt be originally derived from thee.

AND under a deep ſenſe of this moſt ſure and important truth, that without the belief of thy being, and watchful providence, utter uncertainty of happineſs, and apprehenſions full of dread, muſt be diffuſed throughout the whole moral world, we have the higheſt reaſon to rejoice, O thou *firſt all-creating power*, that thy bright and glorious footſteps, and the evidences of thy being, ingraven in ſhining characters, may be diſtinctly traced, through every part of the vaſt ſyſtem of nature. By the numberleſs effects of intelligence and power which we clearly ſee, not one of which could be the cauſe of its own exiſtence, we are neceſſarily led to acknowledge and adore thee, as the firſt and univerſal cauſe, the maker of heaven and earth, and of all things viſible, and inviſible; the former of all material ſubſtances, and the father of all ſpirits. And as the whole of this ſtupendous fabric was thy *deſigned* and *free production*, ſo, to convince us, that every thing in it is continually dependent upon thee, thou haſt made

made it in all its parts, and with all its beauties, efficacies, connections, and uſes, unfixed and fluctuating, and ſubject to infinite *changes:* So that thou canſt *alter* as thou pleaſeſt, or *deſtroy* in an inſtant, all that thy right-hand of power and majeſty hath *formed.* To thee, therefore, would we always direct our views, O *ſelf-exiſtent* GOD, who waſt unchangeably the ſame, before the *mountains were brought forth*, or *ever the foundations of the world* were *laid*——to ſupport our frame, and uphold that being, which thou haſt been pleaſed to vouchſafe unto us——and to preſerve us, by humble acquieſcence and duty, inſeparably united to thee, and in the enjoyment of a dignity and happineſs ſuited to our rank, for ever.

LET us, with profound devotion, celebrate thy praiſe, for the greatneſs of thy majeſty, and wiſdom, diſplayed in the immenſity of the works of nature, their correſpondence to each other, their exact proportions; in the exquiſite ſtructure of particulars, and the harmonious order, and magnificent compoſition of the whole.——*All thy works*, O GOD, *praiſe thee:* The bleſſed inhabitants of heaven, who have been witneſſes to the wonders of thy creating might, magnify thee: And may all thy rational creatures, as if inſpired by one ſpirit, join in this holy act of *adoration*, and ſay, *Thou art worthy*, *O* LORD, *who ſitteſt upon the throne, and liveſt for ever and ever, to receive glory, and honour, and power. For, thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are, and were created.* Amen.

A ſhort

A ſhort prayer; being a continuation of the ſame ſubject.

AND now having diſcovered thee, O great cauſe and author of nature,——*that* thou art, and, in ſome meaſure, *what* thou art; we commit ourſelves to thy continual guidance and direction. Do thou, whoſe all-powerful word did at firſt command *light* to ariſe out of *darkneſs*, aſſiſt our ſincere and humble enquiries, that we may *find* out *more* of thee, and be led on to diſcern more diſtinctly, what *attributes* we ought to aſcribe unto thee. Diſpel, in part, our ignorance, and thoſe clouds of error, that are apt to attend our moſt ſerious and impartial reaſonings, upon a ſubject ſo ſublime, and, in it's full extent of glory, incomprehenſible. And from what we certainly know of thy wonderful works, let us learn a rational ſubmiſſion, and confidence in thee, as to thoſe innumerable other things, that at preſent remain concealed from us, and wrapped up in darkneſs. Let not *pride* and *preſumption* miſlead us. Let not low and irregular *paſſions* debaſe, and enfeeble, our underſtandings. Let not any corrupt *prejudice* darken our minds, and intercept our views of thee. Let not *ſuperſtition*, by diſturbing our imaginations, and alarming our fears, betray us into diſhonourable and impious conceptions of thee——by placing, on thine eternal throne of *ſupremacy*, an *idol* whom we cannot truly reverence, or an object of *horror* that we cannot love. But be pleaſed to grant, O father of our ſpirits, that, ſo far as our faculties can etxend, we may *ſee thee as thou art*, and form juſt and worthy notions of thine infinite excellence. May our knowledge of

of thee purify and elevate our hearts, and make us *partakers of a divine nature.*

And whilſt thine eternity, and ſelf-origination, (aſtoniſhing and unfathomable attributes,) fill our ſouls with admiration and a ſolemn awe; let us not bewilder ourſelves in bold conjectures, and vain attempts to explain, what is ſo far beyond the utmoſt ſcope of our reaſon. But let us be contented with knowing thus much, and animated to purſue ſteadily the great end of our being, by this pleaſing reflection——that there is, and will continue to be for ever, a wiſe, juſt, and good principle, of eternal and reſiſtleſs power, to preſide over, diſpoſe, and guide to happineſs, the univerſe of rational beings.

And as *thou*, O Lord, art in *thyſelf*, and in thine eſſential attributes, ſuch let our principles of *religion* always be; deſpiſing all weak and trivial mixtures, diſclaiming every thing unſocial, every thing gloomy and terrifying, (unleſs to wilful and incorrigible vice;) that it may appear in a light, honourable to thee, the univerſal Creator, and friendly to all thy creatures.——By a conduct ſtrictly conformable to the rules of ſuch a religion as this, ſo rational, wiſe, and in all reſpects worthy of thee, may we find that favour in thy ſight, which the light of nature teaches us to hope for, and which in theſe laſt ages of the world thou haſt expreſsly promiſed, by Jeſus Chriſt; through whom we would offer up to thee our ſupreme praiſes, and everlaſting homage. *Amen.*

Devotions and prayers ſuited to the unity of GOD.

O THOU infinite Creator of the world, as thy being, *thine eternal power and Godhead*, have, from the beginning of the world, been *clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made*——We likewiſe acknowledge, that all nature loudly proclaims thee to be, the *only living* and *true* GOD; GOD *in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath*, and throughout all worlds; and that there is *none beſides thee. Thou diſt ſtretch out the heavens* ALONE, *and hang the earth upon nothing:* And by reaſon of thy neceſſary being, thine independence, and immenſity, thy ſupreme power, and wiſdom, thou art capable of creating all poſſible worlds, nor can any of thy works be rendered more complete, and admirable.

WE, therefore, the creatures of thy power, and thy *reaſonable off-ſpring*, whom thou haſt made capable of celebrating thy praiſes, do moſt humbly adore thee, as *only good, only holy*; as the Father of the intellectual and moral world, and the *bleſſed and only potentate*, who ruleſt ſupreme over all, *and who alone haſt immortality.* Both good and evil ſpring from thee; thou *formeſt* the *light* and the *darkneſs:* Thou *makeſt peace* and *createſt evil:* And all theſe *mixed* ſcenes, we humbly acknowledge, to be *wiſeſt* and *beſt* upon the whole, and moſt exactly fitted to the different powers, and circumſtances, of thy creatures.

AND

And we devoutly pray, O thou firſt and greateſt of all beings, abſolutely perfect, that to *thee alone*, we may ſolemnly and everlaſtingly devote ourſelves, and conſecrate the nobleſt powers of our ſouls. Let us not degrade thy tranſcendent majeſty, nor ſtain thy matchleſs glory, by imagining that any either in heaven, or in earth, can be *likened to*, or *compared* with *thee*. Let us make thee the *ſupreme* object of our religious worſhip, the *only* object of our higheſt reverence, love, and adoration. Let our hope and confidence ultimately center in thee, as the ſource from whence all our comfort muſt flow; as the original fountain of mercy, and the only ſoveraign diſpenſer of happineſs and miſery, to us, and to the whole creation. May we approach *thy* throne, for greater degrees of wiſdom and purity; for the ſupply of our various wants; to relieve and ſuccour us, under all our diſtreſſes; to overlook our involuntary errors; to pardon, upon our ſincere contrition and repentance, our more groſs and heinous crimes; and to concur with our diligent and faithful endeavours, to ſtrengthen our ſouls; and correct every thing that is amiſs——That we may be thoroughly purged from all vitious habits and paſſions, and may acquire a ſteady and invincible reſolution to improve in univerſal virtue, and in a nearer and brighter reſemblance of thee. In this way alone, O thou only God and Father of all, do we preſume to implore thy favour. Do thou graciouſly enable us *to be workers together with thee*, that we may, in our inward temper, be rendered fit objects of thy mercy. Afford us the communications of thy grace, only in that meaſure and degree which is moſt *wiſe* and *fit*, honourable to thy perfections, and conſiſtent with the general rules of thy moral government. May we venerate and ſtand in awe of thee, may we be contented and patient

under all events, conſenting to be governed wholly by thy laws, and acquieſcing, with the moſt entire ſubmiſſion, in all the diſpenſations of thy providence.——Being firmly perſuaded, that as thou art the *ſole ſelf-exiſtent firſt cauſe*, and the uncontroulable diſpoſer of all things throughout the univerſe; all other *powers*, all *ſecondary cauſes*, ſubſiſt every moment by thy continual influence; that there is, and can be, but *one* ultimate end of creation, and providence, purſued through the ſeveral periods of time, and to all eternity; and that nature, in all its operations, and the higheſt and brighteſt orders of intelligent ſpirits, are only thy *miniſters* to execute thy vaſt deſigns.

We would therefore rejoice in thee always, O thou *One ſupreme*, whoſe ſpirit animates, and acts unreſtrained, to the utmoſt bounds of all worlds. In thee, O God, we rejoice, who maintaineſt *one* uniform *order* in the government of the moral world, and haſt fixed but *one* univerſal and unchangeable law of all rational beings——that *in every nation*, they that *truly fear thee*, and, according to the degrees of light, and the advantages which they ſeverally enjoy, *work righteouſneſs*, may find *acceptance* with thee. To thee therefore, with whom alone is *the fountain of life*, who makeſt order to ſpring from confuſion, and good from evil, and haſt ſo graciouſly eſtabliſhed one certain method, by which all mankind may ſecure thy favour——to thee, who liveſt, and reigneſt, ever *One* God, we deſire, as thy reaſonable creatures, and *in the name* of *Chriſt*, to aſcribe ſupreme *unrivalled* glory, and everlaſting praiſes. *Amen.*

A Prayer

A prayer directed to GOD *as a ſpirit.*

O GOD, in this imperfect limited ſtate of our knowledge, and ſurrounded as we are with darkneſs, we deſire always to *ſeek after thee* with reverence and humility, and to continue our ſearches with ardour and earneſtneſs of ſpirit; that we may trace ſome of thy footſteps, and get glimmering notices of thee, where we can never fully comprehend thee.

WE are, notwithſtanding this, thankful for the rank of our nature, which thou haſt placed amongſt the nobleſt orders of thy creatures. And that we may not err through the weakneſs of our reaſon, being placed at ſuch a diſtance from the light of thy throne, may we take the utmoſt care never to aſcribe to thee any properties, that have the leaſt appearance of *limitation* or *defect*. We ſee nothing, in the whole *material* world, that can give us the fainteſt idea, or yield the moſt diſtant reſemblance, of what thou art, or of the ſublime ineffable manner, in which thou exiſteſt. All theſe ſcenes, ſo aſtoniſhing, grand, and ſplendid, and ſhining with numberleſs beauties, are unintelligent, inactive, fading, tranſitory, and liable to an entire decay and diſſolution; and *reaſonable* beings alone bear any impreſſions of thine *image*. We are led therefore, in order to expreſs in the moſt juſt and proper manner, the exalted veneration which we have of thy matchleſs glory, to adore thee as a refined and perfect *ſpirit*,

ſpirit, without *bodily* parts, ſenſations, or paſſions, and entirely diveſted of all *material mixtures*.

O THOU great incomprehenſible, *whom no man hath ſeen*, nor *can ſee*, whoſe *voice no one hath heard at any time*, nor *ſeen thy ſhape*, ſuffer us not to be ſo wofully infatuated, as to *worſhip thee*, who art a pure and infinite *ſpirit*, by ſenſible images, or viſible ſymbols of thy preſence and glory, which thou haſt not preſcribed. But conceiving of thee, as incapable of being in the leaſt degree impreſſed by outward ſhew and oſtentation, let us *worſhip thee* with an enlightened underſtanding, and an uncorrupted ſincerity; and recommend all our adorations, prayers, and thankſgivings, to thine acceptance and favourable regard, by the purity of our ſouls, and the ſtrict and conſtant virtue and goodneſs of our lives. Let all the acts of devotion, which we preſume to offer up unto thee, not conſiſt in mere bodily proſtrations and ſervices, nor in heat of fancy, and the raptures of a wild enthuſiaſm; but be ſober, calm, and rational. May they be in all reſpects ſo formed, and ſo conducted, as to be worthy to be preſented to a being of unerring and boundleſs wiſdom. Thus, O Father of our ſpirits, may we be of the number of thoſe, whom thou *ſeekeſt* and requireſt, *to worſhip thee*. And grant, above all, that our moſt ſolemn offices of religion may not, by corrupt views, or impure mixtures of diſſimulation and hypocriſy, be rendered an abomination in thy ſight: But let us offer up continually holy, ſublime, and *ſpiritual* ſacrifices, acceptable, *through Jeſus Chriſt*, to thee, *O king eternal, immortal, and inviſible*; to whom belong, univerſal dominion and glory. *Amen*.

A form

A form of devotion to be offered up to GOD *as omniſcient.*

O LORD, moſt wonderful in all thy perfections,—— as thou *art* GOD, *from everlaſting to everlaſting*, and didſt, in the beginning, *lay the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands*; ſo earth, air, and ſea, and *the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee.* Thou not only art, and always muſt be, preſent with every part of the real univerſe of beings, and wherever any part of *thine own creation* ſubſiſts; thy preſerving providence, thine animating ſpirit, thine efficacious influence diffuſed through the whole, not only ſupports the worlds that *now are*; but as thou exiſteſt in the infinite ſpaces, beyond the utmoſt bounds of all worlds, thou muſt be capable of unlimited exertions of thy power and goodneſs, and of creating new orders of intelligent beings, to praiſe thee, and to be made happy by thee, *for ever.*

AND (as cloſely connected with thine *omnipreſence*) we adore thine *amazing knowledge*, which reaches to, perceives with an infallible certainty, and thoroughly comprehends, all ſubjects that are capable of being known: Which is completely acquainted with whatever does, or can, *exiſt*; and with whatever is, or can be, *true*, with reſpect to all beings, and all the properties and circumſtances of things.

WE

We acknowledge, in this reſpect, as well as in all others, the infinite diſtance that there is between thee and us; and that the moſt exalted of mankind, from their own experience, and the operations of their own powers, cannot riſe to the leaſt diſtinct conception of the *manner*, in which thine infinite underſtanding diſcerns the moſt minute parts of nature, and much leſs, *how* it takes in at once the vaſt expanſe of the creation, and, in one view, comprehends all the poſſibilities of things. We acknowledge, that by what paſſes within ourſelves, we can learn little more, than that the *wonderful ways of thee*, O God, who art *perfect in knowledge*, are by us inſcrutable, and infinitely remote from our circumſcribed and ſcanty faculties. We deſire therefore, with the deepeſt humility, to worſhip before the throne of thine infinity: Being fully convinced, that we can then, only, entertain, worthy and reſpectful ſentiments, (though ſtill infinitely diſproportioned to the ſubject) when we raiſe thy divine omniſcience, as far as is poſſible, above the utmoſt efforts of all created underſtandings; and ſuppoſe it, in the height, and depth, and glorious extent in which thou poſſeſſeſt it, to be *incommunicable* not to us only, but to all finite natures.

Thy knowledge, O God, is unclouded and univerſal light, in which thou ſitteſt enthroned; though, with reſpect to us, *Clouds and darkneſs are round about thee*. Let the *angels* of *light* praiſe thee, to whom, thou haſt been pleaſed to communicate more extenſive capacities, for diſcovering the wonders of thine omniſcience. And let all mankind chearfully join, (to thoſe of the bright celeſtial hoſts, that are round about thy throne) their fainter and more imperfect praiſes: Eſteeming it their honour, and the moſt worthy employment and exaltation of their faculties,

culties, to bear a part in this glorious harmony. Let earth unite with heaven, in rendering the homage that is due to thee, whoſe *judgments are unſearchable, and thy ways paſt finding out.*

NATURE, in its moſt hidden receſſes, lies all *unveiled* and *open* to thy view: For ſhe is thy *creature*. All things that now *are*, and the *preſent* actual ſcene of things for ever, muſt be entirely ſubject to thy clear and infallible diſcernment: *Thine eyes*, O LORD, *are in every place; thou lookeſt to the ends of the earth, and ſeeſt under the whole heaven.* Equally known likewiſe, to thine infinite underſtanding, are all *paſt* events; all thine own works, and all the deſigns and actions of thy creatures, from the *beginning of the world*.

BUT, O GOD, when we carry our devout contemplations beyond all this, and adore thy ſtupendous omniſcience, not only as reaching to all the *preſent* and the *paſt*, even to the utmoſt limits of the univerſe; but perceiving as diſtinctly, as if they were actually preſent, remote and dark *futurities*, and giving a kind of determinate being, in thy vaſt unbounded mind, to all *poſſible* events——When, O eternal fountain of intellectual light and truth, we celebrate, with humble piety, this matchleſs and ineffable glory of thy nature; our faculties are ſwallowed up, and in a manner loſt, in ſo deep and immenſe a ſubject.

MAY theſe thoughts never be eraſed from our minds; but impreſs upon us a more ſerious and awful veneration of thee, the great original, and everlaſting ſupport, of univerſal life and being: May we be inſpired with a ſpirit of holy admiration, and praiſe. May we be ſtruck with a juſt ſenſe of our own meanneſs, and

of our being, if compared with thee, *leſs than nothing and vanity*. May our reaſon be in our own opinion (thoroughly purged from all remains of pride, and preſumption) ſo debaſed, and, in compariſon with infinity, ſo contracted and deſpicable, that we may readily ſubmit to thy guidance, and be always diſpoſed to receive thy pure and divine illuminations. May our ſpirits be reduced to that proper order, ſo modeſt, calm, and teachable, and open to inſtruction; that we may maintain a conſtant, uninterrupted intercourſe with thee, *with whom is no darkneſs at all*. And, that we, O bleſſed GOD, (to whom thou haſt been pleaſed to communicate a ray from thy ſupreme intelligence) may attain to a greater reſemblance of thee; let us according to our ſeveral powers, advantages, and *ſtations* in life, ſteadily purſue, and endeavour to excel in, all important and uſeful knowledge. Deliver us more completely from the infatuations of indolence, and pride; from the blind and inſlaving power of prejudice, and vice. May the improvements of knowledge be delightful to our ſouls. Let us prefer the pleaſures of the underſtanding, which enoble our frame, and gratify our moſt refined deſires, infinitely beyond the unworthy, unſatisfying, fleeting ſatisfactions of ſenſuality, and a brutal life. And do thou preſide over, and direct, all our enquiries in ſuch a manner, as that we may be preſerved from every dangerous and fatal error; and led to diſcern all thoſe truths, which are either neceſſary, or of great importance, to our happineſs.

BUT, above all, we pray, that the increaſing light of our minds may have ſuch a bleſſed effect upon us, as to produce ſuitable degrees of inward refinement, ſtrength, and dignity; and render all our virtues more reſplendent and amiable. Let us look upon ignorance *itſelf*, as the ſoul's nakedneſs and ſhame; and

and upon the corruption of our principles of conduct, thorough wilful vitious ignorance, as its greateſt infelicity.——Theſe our humble petitions, we are encouraged to offer up unto thee, (in comfortable hope of thy gracious acceptance, and condeſcending favour.) O *our heavenly father*, who are the former of *all ſouls*, to which thou haſt an eaſy acceſs; and canſt guide and influence them in various ways, that are conſiſtent with thy wiſe government of the moral world, and with the *free exerciſe* of their natural powers.

The ſame continued.

WE deſire to continue our acts of devotion, and our earneſt ſupplications to thee for farther help, O LORD, *who haſt ſearched us, and known us. Thou knoweſt our down-ſitting, and our up-riſing*, thou *underſtandeſt our thought afar off. Thou compaſſeſt our path, and our lying-down, and art acquainted with all our ways: And there is not a word in our tongue, but, lo! O* LORD, *thou knoweſt it altogether*. Let theſe conſiderations deeply affect our hearts, and raiſe, and preſerve, in us, an habitual regard to thee, and fear to offend thee. Let us never be ſuch ſtupid and daring ſinners, as to allow ourſelves under thine intimate *view* and *inſpection*, in the indulgence of impure and extravagant paſſions; or in any practices, which our reaſon, and thy holy and immutable law, condemn, as a ſtain and blemiſh to our nature. In ſo awful and majeſtic *a preſence*, let us be aſhamed of all baſeneſs and diſhoneſty. Let us look upon thine approbation and eſteem, as the higheſt pitch of glory we can attain to; and to ſecure it, trample under foot the applauſes of our fellow-creatures, and all worldly honours. *Naked and open*, as our thoughts, deſigns, and works are *to thee*, and ſubject to thy righteous judgment, let purity of thought, circumſpection of ſpirit, and the ſtricteſt regularity of conduct, never forſake us. May we be ſtrongly convinced, and live under the conſtant lively impreſſion, of theſe great truths——that no diſguiſes can ſhelter from *thine eye*; that all arts and colourings of hypocriſy are vain;

vain; that *the darkneſs and the light are both alike to thee*; nor *is there any ſhadow of death, where the workers of iniquity can hide themſelves.*

And, O thou great *trier of the hearts of the children of men*, let not our ſpirits be depreſſed, and ſink within us; let not the ſtrength and ſteadineſs of our reſolution, or the ardor of our zeal for the ſacred cauſe of religion, and the honour of thy laws and government, in the leaſt abate; however we may be ſuſpected, ſlandered, vilified, and unjuſtly perſecuted, by the craft, pride, and malice of the ungodly. Let us not, by a baſe, and cowardly renouncing our faith in thee, and the teſtimony of a good conſcience, give occaſion to the enemies of truth and mercy, (with whom worldly *power* and *gain* are *godlineſs)* to blaſpheme and triumph: But deſpiſing all their cruelty and terror, and deriving, ſo far as we are conſcious of our integrity, inward encouragement and comfort, from the contemplation of thine omniſcience, may we be *ſtedfaſt, and unmoveable*, and *always abounding in the work of the* Lord.

And, O God, while we nobly aſſert, and with calmneſs, firmneſs, and intrepidity of mind, contend for, our own freedom and independency, but on thee alone; let us ſincerely abhor, and to the utmoſt of our power oppoſe, all uſurped *dominion* over the *faith* and *conſciences* of others. Keep us from being tranſported by a blind intemperate zeal, or an impoſing violent ſpirit, to pronounce raſh and uncharitable cenſures upon the final ſtate of any of our brethren; leaſt we incur the heavy guilt of invading thine awful prerogative, before the tribunal of whoſe omniſcience only, the *hearts* of men are cognizable, and who alone *art able to ſave, and to deſtroy*.——Wherever our lot is caſt,

caſt, and whatever our ſtation and rank of life may be, whether public, or private, ſocial, or ſolitary, of more inlarged, or contracted influence, may we be equally careful to diſcharge every part of our duty to thee, *our father, who ſeeſt in ſecret.*

But let it be our higheſt concern, and the principal ſcope of our ambition, and of all our endeavours, to fix deep, in our minds, the *ſeeds* of univerſal goodneſs, and to cultivate and eſtabliſh pure, benevolent, and godlike *diſpoſitions*, being ſteadily perſuaded that no diſpoſition to mercy, no generous purpoſe formed, though it was not in our power to execute it, none of our moſt *concealed* and *hidden* virtues can eſcape thy notice, or fail of receiving, from thee, their due honour, and reward. And becauſe none of us can thoroughly *underſtand our errors*, but we are all apt to be miſled by blind partiality and ſelf-deceit, in the judgments which we form concerning ourſelves, do thou, O God, who *knoweſt our frame, ſearch us* thoroughly. Illuminate what is dark, calm what is tumultuous, and reduce and regulate whatever is diſorderly; *if there is any wicked way* that is connived at, any *latent ſeed* of iniquity *in us*, diſcover it to us, and enable us to root it out, and *lead us in the way everlaſting.*

We ſee, O great and bleſſed God, with concern and horror, that thine *immenſity*, and *all-piercing eye*, are apt to excite dread and averſion in corrupt and vitious minds. And, being deeply affected, with what we know muſt be the extremely miſerable ſtate, of a deſolate, fatherleſs, and ungoverned world of rational creatures; and ſtruck with a ſtrong ſenſe of compaſſion for theſe fatally deluded ſinners; we pray, that they may be reclaimed from this moſt unnatural depravity.——Save them, O God, in ſome way or other that is *beſt known* to thine infinite wiſdom; how

how terrible ſoever it may be, to their guilty conſciences——O, *ſave* them, *that they periſh not.*

And together with them, we alſo pray moſt earneſtly for ourſelves,——that our reaſon may never be ſo totally darkened, nor any of us become ſo inſenſible of the moſt important privileges, and conſolations, of derived and dependent natures, as to wiſh that it were *even poſſible* to fly from thy vital and efficacious *ſpirit*; that animates, and diffuſes beauty, and order, and tendencies to happineſs, throughout the whole of created beings. May we rejoice in the aſſurance which we have, that thou being every where preſent, and the firſt power in the univerſe, art able to regulate all affairs in all places, and at all times; ſo that no confuſion can poſſibly happen, to perplex the plan of thy government, and obſtruct its main deſign.

But above all, from an ardent zeal for thy glory, and an earneſt deſire of the happineſs of all our fellow-creatures, would we mix the moſt generous and ſublime *joy* with our praiſes; when we conſider the univerſe as thy *great temple*, in *every part* of which thou wilt for ever reſide, to accept, graciouſly, the rational and humble homage of *all* thy ſincere worſhippers ——To thee, from this thine *holy*, moſt magnificent, and glorious temple, may adorations, prayers, and thankſgivings, be continually offered; and may all mankind be ſpeedily *viſited by the day-ſpring from on high*, and brought to join in one ſolemn form of devotion, with one heart, and one voice, aſcribing *glory to thee*, as the God of nature, and the God *and father of Jeſus Chriſt*, through him the great and *only mediator*. Amen, and Amen.

An adoration of the divine wiſdom.

O GOD, who art not only high above all *human* thought, but infinitely exalted beyond all finite conceptions, we humbly acknowledge that thou art in all things, and for all the peculiar glories of thy nature, moſt *worthy to be praiſed.*——But amongſt the divine perfections, which by their united influence, conſtitute thy conſummate excellence, and render thy being of ſuch vaſt importance and uſe to the creation, we are bound, in a particular manner, to celebrate thine infinite *wiſdom*; which is underived, independent, and immutable; and in the degree in which thou poſſeſſeſt it, in it's abſolute fulneſs, in it's neceſſary unalterable perfection, incapable both of increaſe and diminution, is thy matchleſs and ſole prerogative. We, therefore, moſt juſtly adore thee as *only wiſe*, and, upon this account, the *only potentate*, and fit to be acknowledged, as the ſupreme and ſole monarch of the world.

AND in this thine univerſal rule we have the utmoſt reaſon to rejoice, when we conſider that thine immenſe and unfathomable wiſdom *directs*, and *guides*, all thine other glorious attributes, in their great and ſtupendous operations:——So that they all conſpire to promote the ſame end, and can never interrupt or obſtruct each other. Even thine unbounded power, O GOD, which might otherwiſe fill us with dread and confuſion, is now become a pleaſing object of our contemplations, as we are aſſured, that

that it can never be exerted, but in producing what is *fitteſt* and *beſt*. And, O thou perfect excellence, infinitely lovely and adorable, it is thy goodneſs, as ſupremely wiſe, as it is adviſed, and conducted, and bounded, by wiſdom; that we eſteem a rational ground of our moſt chearful and exalted praiſes: And in which alone we deſire to confide, for the defenſe of the good which we enjoy at preſent, for the ſupply of our future wants, and the proviſion of happineſs ſuited to our whole nature, and to the general ſtate and order of the creation, both now, and for ever.

BUT, O GOD, though we would always acknowledge with profound humility, that it is impoſſible for us to form an adequate notion of thine unerring wiſdom, into the deep receſſes of which, nothing but itſelf can penetrate,——yet, at the ſame time, we are under the ſtrongeſt obligations to render thee our devout thankſgivings for the *evidence*, which thou haſt been pleaſed to afford us, that thou art really poſſeſſed of this unlimited perfection. We bleſs and adore thee, that thou haſt ſo dignified our frame, and adorned it with ſuch peculiar faculties, as may enable us to diſcern the harmony, and inviolable connection of thy ſeveral attributes: And to diſcover by that means, with ſufficient clearneſs and certainty *that* thou art, even when, with reſpect to degree and extent of excellence, we muſt be for ever incapable of knowing *how*, or *what*, thou art. And, as we are ſure, O GOD, from the operations of our own minds, that there is derived intelligence, and have reaſon to conclude, from the general order, and correſpondence,——and gradual aſcent towards perfection, obſervable in all thine other works, that there are many different and more enlarged capacities of reaſon, diſperſed, by thy ſkilful and liberal hand, amongſt higher orders of intelligent ſpirits: In thee, who

art the giver and diſpenſer of the moſt exalted powers, of all rational creatures, we, with humble veneration acknowledge, that there is, a ſpring of wiſdom, inconceivably beyond the utmoſt they are capable of acquiring, by a continual progreſs to eternity.——And in thee, the firſt cauſe, and author of univerſal being, we adore a *fountain* of *wiſdom*, equal to the great work of creation; to the producing an unlimited extent of intelligent creatures; and capable of preſerving the whole, in an uninterrupted order, for ever.

But, O common father of all ſpiritual natures, as thou haſt been pleaſed thus far to unvail and manifeſt thyſelf to the pure natural reaſon of our minds, thou haſt alſo graciouſly adapted the frame of the viſible world, in ſuch a manner, as to confirm and ſtrengthen theſe our inward convictions. In the general conſtitution of the univerſe, ſo far as it is ſubject to our ſenſes, or falls within the notices and contemplations of the human underſtanding, we trace *the work of thy fingers*.

We behold *wonders* of *wiſdom* comprehended in the minuteſt, as well as more obviouſly expoſed, though even there but in faint and rude ſketches, in the greater and more magnificent objects. The deeper we ſearch, the more *thine hand* appears, and the more we diſcern of inimitable and incomprehenſible contrivance. In thy marvellous fabric of nature, though compoſed of infinitely various parts, we ſee nothing but one regular conſiſtent ſcheme. To the glory of thine eternal and unlimited wiſdom, we ſee nothing redundant; nothing ſhort and imperfect, in reſpect of the general intent and ſcope of being; nothing diſproportioned to its own particular nature and deſign.

NOR are there wanting, O GOD, among the works of nature, particular inſtances of thine immenſe wiſdom, the moſt ſplendid and illuſtrious, the moſt ingaging and admirable, to employ our ſublimeſt faculties, and afford abundant matter for our everlaſting wonder, reverence, and praiſe. For it is thou who haſt ordained and fixed the ſun in the firmament of heaven, ſo as to diſpenſe his light and heat regularly, and in the moſt exact proportions, to its dependent planatory worlds——Thou haſt marſhall'd all the ſtars, in the niceſt order, and preſerved them in their proper places—— Thou haſt *laid the foundations of the earth, that it ſhould not be removed*; till the time cometh for the diſſolution of the preſent ſyſtem, that thine eternal and inexhauſtible wiſdom may create new worlds. The whole *earth*, O LORD, we acknowledge, *is full of thy riches*, and affords moſt glorious proofs of thine infinite ſkill. And we have equal reaſon to adore *thy wonders in the deep*, which thou haſt ſo greatly formed, and with ſuch amazing art, as to ſtrike the mind, at the firſt ſight of it, with a religious awe and admiration. We praiſe thee, O ſupreme ruler of this vaſt and mighty *ocean, who haſt meaſured the waters* of it *in the hallow of thine hand*: That *thou haſt ſet a ſtrict bound which they may not paſs over, that they turn not again, to cover the earth*; that thou haſt appointed it to ſupply vapours and clouds, fountains and rivers, to adorn the earth with verdure and beauty, and for the ſupport and refreſhment of all its living inhabitants: That thou haſt placed in it *creeping things innumerable, both ſmall and great beaſts* to adminiſter, in various reſpect, to the convenience and ſervice of thy rational creature, man. And we, above all, praiſe thee for this moſt illuſtrious effect of thy gracious wiſdom, that thou haſt made the watry regions, a means of common ſociety, and mutual friendſhip, to all mankind,

of the moſt diſtant nations of the earth. Thus, O GOD, are we, inſpired, and ſtrongly animated, by conſidering the greatneſs of thy works, their admirable compoſition, exquiſite beauties, and harmonious and variouſly conſpiring uſes, for the making all to centre in one common point of univerſal good,—— to magnify thee, the great former and diſpoſer of the whole. *Mighty art thou, O* LORD, *in wiſdom*, and thy thoughts *are very deep*; thou art wonderful *in counſel, and excellent in working*. *Wiſdom* was coeternal *with thee*, and *thou didſt poſſeſs her in the beginning of thy ways, before thy works of old*. Thy glory has been from everlaſting; and thine be the praiſe for ever. *Amen*.

A prayer

A prayer adapted to the ſame ſubject.

O LORD, *thou haſt eſtabliſhed the world by thy wiſdom, and ſtretched out the heavens by thy diſcretion.* Thou haſt made every thing perfect in its kind, and *beautiful* in its ſeaſon. And as thou haſt eminently diſplayed thine aſtoniſhing ſkill in the make of man, and eſpecially in his internal frame——Thou haſt alſo in ſo exact a manner diſpoſed and adjuſted the outward courſe of things, that by reaſon of the different relations, orders, and dependencies of mankind, and the variety of incidents and changes which frequently occur in human life, there full ſcope given for the trial of every temper, and for all godlike, manly, and ſocial virtues, to exert themſelves in the utmoſt dignity and luſtre.

To thee therefore, O GOD, who alone art fit to govern thy reaſonable creatures, and to regulate the affairs of the univerſe ſo as to promote the main end of this thy moral government—— To thee, we abſolutely refer ourſelves. Do thou be pleaſed to chooſe and appoint our ſtation of life for us. Let thy will bound all our deſires, and regulate all our paſſions.——If thou determineſt proſperity to be our portion, give us a grateful ſenſe of thy diſtinguiſhing goodneſs; and endue us with that temperance of ſpirit, that generous and enlarged ſenſe of benevolence, that we may, in our ſeveral ſtations, be more extenſively uſeful, and greater bleſſings to mankind. Let not affluence and plenty make

make us careleſs, and luxurious, and devoted to purſuits of vanity. Let it not baniſh from our breaſts, the gentle ſpirit of humanity, to make way for arbitrarineſs, inſolence and tyranny. Let not any height of wealth or honour, make us forget that we are men, and that all mankind are our brethren——who, through thine infinite wiſdom, are ordained to *meet together*, and both *rich* and *poor*, the higheſt and the loweſt, to conſtitute one great *family*, of which thou art the common father and lord.

But if, O thou ſovereign and all-diſpoſing mind, if in a world, which, in order to produce what is beſt upon the whole, thou haſt made ſubject to infinite changes, it ſhould be our lot to be depreſſed, and to ſtruggle with afflictive ſcenes; let us ſtill adore thy wiſdom, think of thee with reverence and honour, and acknowledge all the ways of thy providence to be *equal*, and *right*. With a compoſed and patient reſignation, let us ſay, *Thy will be done*. Inſtead of murmuring at the ungrateful and undeſirable ſcene, let us endeavour to improve it, and acquire, by means of it, greater refinement, firmneſs, and conſtancy of mind. When croſſes and diſappointments befal us, let us not be ſo ruffled and diſcompoſed, as to be inattentive to the ſtill voice of reaſon, and incapable of the ſolid ſupports and conſolations of religion. Let not any of the adverſe occurrences of life make us dejected, and deſponding. Let us learn from them the *vanity* of the world, but neglect no part of our *duty* in it. Let us be quickened in our aſpirings after, and preparations for, a happineſs that is more exalted and durable,——more pure, independent, and divine. Let us be grave and ſerious under theſe humbling diſpenſations of thy providence, but not moroſe, peeviſh, and unſociable. From what we are called to ſuffer, may we acquire greater ſoftneſs and tenderneſs of ſpirit towards all

that

that are in diſtreſs, and a more warm and lively feeling of their miſeries.

O God, thou haſt been pleaſed in thy moſt gracious and adorable wiſdom, to plant in us an ardent and unextinguiſhable deſire of happineſs, and ſtrong inſtincts to purſue it: And we thank thee, for having ſo admirably adapted the conſtitution of our nature, to the chief and ulmitate end of thy creation and moral government. But though we are thus taught, and ſtrongly incited by thee, O God of nature and father of our reaſonable and immortal ſpirits, to enquire, *who will ſhew us any good*, and, eſpecially, who will direct us, to chooſe what is fitteſt and beſt for us upon the whole; yet as we are utterly unable to determine rightly for ourſelves, as to outward appearances of good, and particularly ſtates and circumſtances of life, we moſt earneſtly pray, *that we may never be allowed to enjoy* any thing, that the world is moſt apt to admire, applaud, and envy, or that we ourſelves may think to be in the higheſt degree deſirable, if it would ſpoil our tempers, or corrupt our integrity.——But when thou perceiveſt that this would be the effect, O God, *lift up the light of thy countenance upon us*, to irradiate and purge our minds: Look down in mercy on us thy frail and erring creatures, and either raiſe us to juſter and wiſer ſentiments, or *diſappoint* our fondeſt wiſhes; and diſpoſe things ſo in the courſe of thy providence, that all our *endeavours*, to bring this moſt dreadful evil upon ourſelves, may be entirely *defeated*. And if *adverſity* be the ſchool in which our virtues are moſt likely to grow and flouriſh, we pray for *that* to be our portion. We *would be nothing*, but what thou wouldſt have us to be; *do every thing*, which thou wouldſt have us to do; and *ſuffer whatever* thou thinkeſt fit we ſhould ſuffer. We eſteem ourſelves highly honoured by being under

under thy protection, and having all our affairs over-ruled, ordered, and controuled by thy providence. While we move and act, in concurrence with thine unerring wisdom, we are sure, that we ourselves are, safe, and truly wise here, and, as the necessary consequence, shall be honourable and happy for ever.——To thee, *O* God *only wise, who art able to keep us from falling*, to lead us in the paths of truth and righteousness, and to deliver us finally from the dominion of error and vice, *to thee be glory in the churches*, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Devotions

Devotions ſuited to the goodneſs of GOD.

O THOU eternal and inexhauſtible fountain of mercy, whoſe nature is *love*, and *goodneſs* itſelf,——We deſire to raiſe our minds to the higheſt pitch of purity and fervour, to ſtir up all our rational powers, and every ingenuous and grateful affection, implanted within us, in order to adore and magnify thee, for this ſupremely glorious perfection of thy nature; which renders thee infinitely amiable, and the joy of the whole intelligent creation. And while thine abſolute eternity, omnipreſence, and infinity aſtoniſh, thy mere irreſiſtible power is dreadful, and thy ſtrict juſtice has a ſevere and diſcouraging aſpect, eſpecially to guilty ſinners, we can contemplate thine eternal and all-animating goodneſs, thy gracious and moderating juſtice, thine unbounded mercy, and almighty benevolence, with delightful wonder, veneration, and love.

GLORY *be to thee, O* LORD, who art always immutably diſpoſed to diſpenſe the *wiſeſt*, and *fitteſt*, (which, to thine infinite underſtanding, muſt always be the ſame as *all poſſible*) good to the whole, and to every part of thy creation. All the ſcattered communications of good, that appear in the univerſe, all the varieties of excellence, all the ample proviſions for happineſs, all the diſcoveries of a generous and diffuſive benevolence, which are diſperſed among the beings that inhabit it——are derived from thee, and are indeed but a faint *ſhadow* of that boundleſs

perfection, which thou thyſelf poſſeſſeſt. And thou haſt ſo fixed the univerſal frame of nature, that when it is not obſtructed, but allowed to fulfil its appointed and regular courſe, it always tends to good upon the whole. The inſtincts of inferior creatures to tenderneſs, and beneficent offices, we juſtly adore as diſplays *of thy goodneſs*, O thou great creator of the world!

But, O Lord, as *thou art good to all, and thy tender mercies are over all thy works*; ſo we are bound, in a peculiar manner, to praiſe thee for the ſingular care which thou wert pleaſed to expreſs for the happineſs of thy rational creation; and, above all, for the wonderful acts of *thy loving-kindneſs and mercy to all the children of men*. We adore thee, not as *our* creator and father only, but as the *merciful father of all mankind*: Who haſt magnified thy wiſdom and goodneſs, in the curious frame and ſtructure of our bodies, (in reſpect to which we acknowledge ourſelves to be *fearfully and wonderfully made*,) but much more, in the ſublime powers and faculties of our minds, formed after *thy* divine *image*——whereby we are rendered capable of the refined and exalted pleaſures of religion, and virtue; of the pleaſures of ſociety, benevolence, and friendſhip; and capable of knowing, loving, ſerving, reſembling, and for ever enjoying thee, the immutable fountain of life, and light, of perfection, glory, and bleſſedneſs!

We likewiſe adore thee as our conſtant preſerver, and unwearied bountiful benefactor, the God of our lives, and the author of all our happineſs, to whoſe unmerited bounty we owe—— any degree of health, which we enjoy in our bodies, the free and regular exerciſe of the inward powers and capacities of our minds, our plenty, peace, and liberty, our reputation, influence and

and uſefulneſs; and all the neceſſaries, conveniences, and comforts, which thy liberal hand has provided, to ſweeten human life, and render our paſſage, through this ſtate of diſcipline and trial, agreeable and eaſy to us. Theſe clear teſtimonies of thy goodneſs, thou haſt been pleaſed to afford us in the preſent ſtate; to ſupport and encourage our minds, while we are waiting for the fuller manifeſtations of it, in the glorious world above.

For, to our unſpeakable joy and conſolation, all nature proclaims thee, and thou haſt been pleaſed to repreſent thyſelf to us, not as a God ſurrounded with inacceſſible terrors, and breathing nothing but eternal vengeance and deſtruction to all who have been ſo unhappy as to deviate from the law and order of their being, into paths of vice, and extravagance; but as *one, to whom judgment is a ſtrange work*, averſe from thy ſtated unchangable diſpoſition, unleſs urged to it, by neceſſary maxims of wiſdom and goodneſs; as one in whom fury reſideth not, as ſlow to anger, and abundant in mercy——who doſt commiſerate our errors, art deſirous that we ſhould return from our backſlidings, and ever ready to extend thy pardoning mercy, to thy frail degenerate creatures, upon their ſincere repentance and reformation. And we deſire to raiſe and refine our praiſes, (that they may, in ſome meaſure, be worthy to be joined to thoſe of angels and archangels, and the innumerable glorious hoſt of heaven) for the *unſpeakable gift of thine only Son, to ſave thy people from their ſins:* And that *thou art in Chriſt Jeſus, reconciling the world unto thyſelf, not imputing unto* penitent *ſinners, their treſpaſſes. Who can* ſufficiently *declare* thy marvellous *works* of goodneſs and *compaſſion*, O God? *Who can utter all thy praiſe?*

WHILE we enjoy all theſe innumerable and unmerited favours, the free gifts of thee, O munificent parent of good, let us not darken and diſtreſs our minds, by entertaining any diſhonourable and ungrateful *ſuſpicions* concerning thine infinite goodneſs. Let us not be inſenſible of the mercies, by which we are encompaſſed, enlivened, comforted, and redeemed from ſin and miſery. Let us not, from our ignorance of the views of providence in particular events, object againſt the whole adminiſtration of it; nor be ſo abſurdly vain, and arrogant, as to pretend to ſubſtitute, in the room of any of the works, which thou, O GOD, haſt wrought, a wiſer and more effectual method of communicating the greateſt good upon the whole. But may this part of thy divine character, which ſupplies univerſal life to the creation, diffuſe its warmth, and quickening influences, throughout all mankind; exciting all to the higheſt refinement of their moral and ſocial powers. Let it, according to its natural tendency, produce, in the virtuous, an increaſing generous ardor and delight in doing good; a reformation of manners, in the degenerate; confidence of mercy, in the penitent; and calm reſignation and hope, in the afflicted.

AND for ourſelves, in particular, we moſt humbly pray, that a deep and efficacious ſenſe of thy ſtupendous goodneſs may remain upon our hearts, and be a principle of conſtant and chearful obedience to thy holy laws. May *we love* thee above all, as a being ſupremely excellent. Let not our love of thee be a groſs and ſenſual affection, wholly proceeding from warm and lively ſpirits, and raptured paſſions; but pure and intellectual. Our underſtandings being fully enlightened, and eſtabliſhed in juſt and worthy conceptions of thee, let us prefer thee to all other beings, and

and center our ſupreme complacency in thee. And let the foundation of this high eſteem, be not merely particular inſtances of favour and mercy conferred upon us, but the eſſential goodneſs of thy nature. Let us raiſe our love of, and delight in thee, into truly generous and diſintereſted diſpoſitions, by chiefly fixing their ground in thine infinite benevolence; which always inclines thee, O univerſal parent, to adminiſter impartial juſtice to all, *without reſpect of perſons*, to communicate happineſs, not to any *arbitrarily* diſtinguiſhed and choſen to be favourites; but, in the moſt *equitable* and *fit proportions*, to the univerſe of thy rational creatures. But above all, O God, grant that we may be transformed into a *reſemblance* of *thy mercy*. May we endeavour to tranſcend the character of merely righteous, and riſe, above it, to that of good men, tender-hearted, ſympathizing, and univerſally benevolent. May we be true lovers of our country, and the friends of all mankind. May our ſouls be ſo enlarged and diffuſed, as to comprehend, within the ſcope of their good wiſhes at leaſt, all beings capable of happineſs. May we imitate thee, *O father of mercies, and* God *of all comfort*, by relieving the diſtreſſed, inſtructing the ignorant, confirming the doubting and irreſolute, and endeavour to remove, in all with whom we converſe, needleſs fears and anxieties, by promoting worthy and amiable apprehenſions of thee; that being free from all ſuperſtition, they may rejoice in thee as their *father*, at the ſame time that they prepare, with awful reverence to meet thee, as their omniſcient and impartial *judge*.

O moſt gracious God, enable us to allay every uneaſy ferment, and to ſubdue every turbulent and injurious paſſion; that, being inſpired by thy divine ſpirit, we may abhor all malevolence and cruelty, all rancour and malice, all pride and oppreſſion,

ſion, and all deſires of revenge. May we be diſpoſed *to love our enemies, do good to thoſe who hate and perſecute us*, that we may prove ourſelves to be the genuine *children of thee our heavenly father; who doſt good* even *to the evil, and the unthankful*, who *cauſeſt thy ſun to riſe on the good, and on the bad*, and *ſendeſt rain on the juſt, and on the unjuſt*. O God, thou art the father of the rational world, who didſt form them all for happineſs; and thou didſt intend all inferior creatures, who are capable of pleaſure and pain, for good upon the whole, adapted to their reſpective natures: We deſire to concur with thee, in doing our utmoſt, to advance this great end of thy creation and providence. Do thou aſſiſt us in forming, and make us vigorous and unwearied in executing, the moſt noble and extenſive ſchemes of public, and private uſefulneſs. May we ſtrive, to the fulleſt extent of our power, to make all around us eaſy and happy. And as thou haſt implanted, in us, natural and unextinguiſhable ſympathies, and ſoft relentings of heart, at all appearances of evil and miſery; may we always cheriſh this divine diſpoſition, and eſteem it our moſt worthy imployment, and our moſt exalted pleaſure, to baniſh, as much as in us lies, *vice*, and all *real evil*, out of the world. Animated by ſuch a ſpirit as this, may we experience a conſtant ſource of dignity, and of refreſhing joy and tranquility, within: And finding ourſelves raiſed, and elevated, to a nearer reſemblance of *thee*, may we be always prompted to aſcend ſtill higher, towards the perfection of our nature; till at laſt we ſhall be cloſely, and for ever, united to thee, *O thou* God *of love*, from whom all happineſs flows: And to whom be rendered, by all beings endued with reaſon, all honour, obedience, and grateful ſervice, both now, and for ever. *Amen.*

An univerſal prayer : Or a prayer for all ranks and conditions of men.

O GOD, thou *haſt made, of one blood, all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth*——And as they are all *thine off-ſpring*, with reſpect to their reaſonable and immortal part, and derived from one common parent by their earthly nature, thou haſt evidently declared it to be thy deſign in their firſt formation, that they ſhould conſider themſelves as one public community, governed by the ſame general laws, whoſe dependence is mutual, and their intereſt inſeparable; and who are to be ſupported and nouriſhed by a ſpirit of benevolence, and united zeal for the common good, diffuſed through all the parts. As, therefore, we are plainly taught by nature, and as it is a duty, which thou haſt expreſsly enjoined upon us by revelation,—— we would offer up *ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks, for all men.*

O THOU GOD *of the ſpirits of all fleſh*, who wouldſt *have all men to be ſaved*, and to *come to the knowledge of the truth*, grant, we beſeech thee, *that thy ways may be known upon earth, and thy ſaving health unto all nations.* May all mankind have their underſtandings, and their hearts united, in acknowledging, adoring, and humbly ſerving thee, *the only true and living* GOD, *and Jeſus Chriſt, whom thou haſt ſent, as the only mediator between* GOD *and man.* Be pleaſed ſo to direct, and order, all the affairs of the world (in a manner conſiſtent with thine infinite wiſdom, and

and with the eſtabliſhed rules of thy government over intelligent and free creatures) that all hindrances to the introduction, and more complete eſtabliſhment, of thy univerſal kingdom of purity and righteouſneſs, may be ſpeedily removed.

PUT an end, O bleſſed GOD, to the triumphs of tyranny and violence, throughout the earth; to the ambitious and deſtructive ſchemes of turbulent and ungodly princes; to the effuſion of precious human blood, and to the unnatural devaſtations and calamities of war. Let *not nation riſe up againſt nation, any more*, but *turn their ſwords into plough-ſhears, and their ſpears into pruning-hooks*, and learn to cultivate the arts of univerſal harmony and peace: That there may be no more *hurting* and *deſtroying* throughout all the nations, nor in all *thy holy mountain*; no more any violations of the natural, civil, or religious rights of mankind. But may a manly and chriſtian ſpirit of free inquiry be every where encouraged and honoured; and all the attempts of weak and ignorant, or of intereſted and deſigning men, to corrupt true religion, and load it with incredible doctrines diſhonourable to thy perfections, be fully detected, and expoſed.

PUT a ſpeedy end likewiſe, (if it be agreeable to thy will, and to the great ſchemes and purpoſes of thine univerſal providence) to all impoſitions upon conſcience, and perſecution for righteouſneſs ſake; and may integrity and virtue, may juſtice, liberty, and happineſs, may *pure* and *undefiled religion before* GOD, *even the father*, and primitive chriſtianity, in its native ſimplicity and glory, univerſally prevail. And that this bleſſed and deſirable ſtate of things may the ſooner, and the more eaſily, take place, be pleaſed, O GOD, to put a ſtop to all *pagan* idolatry, and ſuperſtition. May the impoſture of *Mahomet* be clearly diſcerned,

diſcerned, by all its profeſſors to be a ſcheme that encourages exceſſes of luſt, and ambition, and is therefore unworthy thine infinite purity and juſtice: And remove the prejudices of thine antient people the *Jews*, that they may be again reſtored to thy favour——That ſo, throughout *all the earth*, there may be but *one lord, and his name one.*

BUT as we are concerned for the purity of thy churches, and the honour of the true chriſtian religion, we are bound more particularly and earneſtly to pray, that thou wouldſt utterly ſubvert the antichriſtian, *Romiſh* church, which thou haſt permitted, for ages, to be an ungodly and wicked faction againſt the common rights of mankind. Diſcredit, and bring into everlaſting contempt and deteſtation, all its monſtrous innovations, its enormous pride and tyranny, its multitude of vain traditions, that make void thy holy commandments, its boundleſs ſuperſtitions, its trifling commutations for ſin, its impious doctrines, the horrors of its inquiſition for blood; by which ſhe has been long filling up *the meaſure of her ſins*, and preparing herſelf for *the day of vengeance.* Convert theſe degenerate ſavages, theſe enemies to humanity and mercy, if they ſtill remain capable of any kind and ſoft impreſſions; if not, confound all their devices, and ſpeedily *conſume them with the ſpirit of thy mouth*, and *with the brightneſs of thy coming.*

AND, O GOD of truth and order, we pray for thy *reformed* churches, that they may renounce, more intirely, all *dominion over the faith and conſciences* of their fellow-chriſtians, and be brought nearer to *the truth as it is in Jeſus.* Root up *every plant, which thou our heavenly father haſt not planted*, and rectify every thing that is amiſs, in doctrine, diſcipline, worſhip, and

practice, according to the ſtandard of thy holy and infallible word.

We pray, likewiſe, for all kingdoms, and public communities of men——that thou wouldſt be pleaſed to favour all *good* ſocieties with thy ſpecial protection, and crown them with proſperity and honour; and make uſe of all methods, that are agreeable to the plan of government, which thine infinite wiſdom has eſtabliſhed, for the reformation of ſuch as are *corrupted* and *vicious*, that theſe likewiſe may enjoy the bleſſings of order, peace, and liberty, and become the objects of thy kind and favourable regard.

But above all (as we are by the ſtricteſt ties of duty bound) would we implore thy peculiar bleſſing for the kingdoms of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, to which we ſtand more immediately related. Reſtrain that profaneneſs and blaſphemy, that diſregard to thy providence, and to all public offices of religion; that ſelfiſhneſs, pride, and diſcord; that inconſideration, and levity; that unbounded vanity, luxury, and groſs ſenſuality, which are prevalent in the midſt of us; and which are a diſgrace to, and tend to the utter ruin of, all civil ſocieties. And pour out upon us the contrary ſpirit of wiſdom and piety; of purity, of peace, and mutual harmony; of morality, and juſtice: Pour out upon us a ſpirit of humble repentance, and reformation, of all our *national* vices; a ſpirit of fervent prayer, and ſupplication, for thy mercy; that ſo thou, O great king, and governour among the nations, mayſt be prevailed with to avert peſtilence, and famine, earthquakes, wars, and all other thy deſolating judgments from us, and that our iniquities may not terminate in our utter deſtruction. Grant, that all the inhabitants of theſe lands may have their

their hearts united in the fear of thine holy and awful name, in a joint purſuit of one common intereſt, and in brotherly love, and chriſtian charity, one towards another.——That thou mayſt delight to *dwell among us*, and to *do us good*; that thou mayſt ſucceed and proſper all our public ſchemes and councils, ſo far as they are conſiſtent with equity, and do not interfere with the rights of other nations, and the general good of mankind: And that our religion, and our liberties civil and ſacred, under the auſpicious care of thine over-ruling providence, may be tranſmitted down ſecure, and in their utmoſt perfection, to lateſt generations.

In an eſpecial manner we pray, that thou wouldſt preſerve, and bleſs, our ſovereign lord king George, whom, in thine infinite wiſdom, thou haſt been pleaſed to ſet over us. Eſtabliſh *his heart* in a humble, conſcientious reverence of thee, (O thou *king of kings*, and *lord of lords*, and ſupreme ruler of princes) and *his throne in righteouſneſs*. Continue to inſpire him with a love of juſtice, a zeal for religion, and a generous concern for the welfare of the people, committed to his care. Defend him againſt all the evil deſigns of malevolent and ſeditious men, and give him victory over all his, and the nation's, enemies, both at home, and abroad. Let him *ſcatter the wicked with his eye*; and, *in his days*, *let the righteous flouriſh*, and let *there be abundance of peace*. Support him under the cares and inquietudes, to which thrones are ſubject; and give him magnanimity and fortitude, to bear up under the common misfortunes and calamities of human life, from which the greateſt princes are not exempted. And may his reign over us be long, and glorious, and eaſy to himſelf, and happy to all his ſubjects, and to *Europe* in general.

BLESS, we beſeech thee, his royal highneſs GEORGE Prince of *Wales*, the Princeſs dowager of *Wales*, the Duke, the Princeſſes, and all the royal family. May they know thee, *the* GOD *of their fathers*, and walk before thee with *an humble* and *obedient heart*. May they be adorned with all great and heroic qualities, with every amiable, chriſtian, princely, and divine virtue; and, thereby, be fitted for thoſe high and important ſervices, for which thy providence may have deſigned them. May they be an honour to their illuſtrious ſtations, and eminent bleſſings to mankind.

O THOU ſovereign diſpenſer of juſtice, from whom there is no appeal, preſide in the High Court of Parliament. Over-rule their debates, and conſultations, for the public welfare. Teach thou *our ſenators wiſdom:* And may all the members of that great aſſembly be *men fearing thee*, *hating covetouſneſs*, corruption, and all manner of *iniquity*. May they be directed to ſuch meaſures, and purſue them with ſteadineſs and unanimity, as ſhall eſtabliſh the trade, and peace, and honour of this our native country, and the tranquility of other nations round about us, upon a ſolid and permanent foundation. And grant, that all inferior Magiſtrates may be a *terror to evil doers*, and a *praiſe* to *them that do well*. Let them honour the laws, by an exact obſervance of them themſelves, and by an impartial adminiſtration of juſtice, to all without diſtinction. May they endeavour by their authority, and by their example, to ſuppreſs all flagrant vices and immoralities, and to promote an univerſal reformation of manners in the midſt of us.

To

To that end, do thou proſper the miniſtration of the everlaſting goſpel of thy Son. May *thy miniſters*, of all denominations, have *grace of thee to be found faithful.* Let them not *walk in craftineſs*, nor *handle the word of* GOD *deceitfully:* Let them not *lord it over thine heritage*, but be *examples to the flock.* Let them *mind the things, that make for* purity, and *peace*, thoſe eſſential things, *by which* chriſtians *may edify one another.* And, by their means, may the ignorant be rightly inſtructed, in the momentous principles and duties of religion, ſinners converted from the *error of their ways*, and thy people *built up* in faith, and peace, holineſs, and comfort, unto *eternal life.*

AND, O moſt gracious GOD, that our prayers, like thy mercy, may extend to all ranks and conditions of men, we pray for all the ſons and daughters of affliction; for all that are troubled and diſtreſſed, whether in mind, in body, or outward circumſtances. Eaſe thoſe that are in pain, reſtore the ſick, ſtrengthen thoſe who labour under infirmities and decays of nature. Do thou from heaven, the habitation of thy glory and goodneſs, the *father of the fatherleſs*, and the GOD *and judge of the widow, bind up the broken in heart*, and *comfort thoſe that mourn.* Support the aged, ſuccour the tempted, ſatisfy the doubting, and ſupply *the poor with bread. Plead the cauſe* of the oppreſſed and perſecuted; whom we would remember, with a generous ſympathy, while we ourſelves enjoy the invaluable privilege of worſhiping thee, without reſtraint or terror, according to the light of our own minds, and the dictates and convictions of our own conſciences. And grant, that one ſpirit of piety, purity and peace, and of benevolence, harmony, and happineſs, may be diffuſed through thy whole reaſonable creation.

AND

And we pray that all mankind, eſpecially, may aim, in their ſeveral ſtations, to be as uſeful as poſſible; and to communicate the moſt extenſive and general good. Let openneſs of heart, and mutual confidence, and a delight in the proſperity of others, increaſe the happineſs, and alleviate the cares of human life. Let all carefully avoid criminal artifice, and fraud, and practice ſtrict juſtice and fidelity, in all its branches. Let not prejudice or pride tempt them; let not a miſguided and headſtrong zeal ever tranſport them to violate theſe holy and immutable obligations. Reduce, O God, all their appetites, all their affections and deſires, to that calm temperature, and may they behave, in the various relations of life, with that equity and candour, that gentleneſs and goodneſs, that mutual reſpect and honour, as will beſt ſubſerve the great ends, for which thou haſt formed them for ſociety here, and made them capable of more refined ſocial affections, and more exalted ſocial pleaſures, in the future world——when they ſhall be joined to the *ſpirits of the juſt made perfect*, *to an innumerable company of angels*, *to Jeſus the mediator of the new covenant*, and to thee, the everlaſting *Father* and *judge* of all, in the higheſt dignity and perfection of their nature. Now to thee, the almighty creator, the continual preſerver, and the merciful *ſavicur*, of *all men*, but eſpecially of them that believe, be aſcribed, through *Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour* [a], everlaſting praiſe, and glory, love, obedience, and ſubmiſſion, as a homage due from all thy creatures. *Amen.*

[a] Tit. iii. 4,—6.

A general

A general prayer: Or a prayer for common occaſions.

O MOST glorious and for ever bleſſed LORD our GOD, whoſe *kingdom ruleth over all: Thy kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom*, and *thy dominion endureth from generation* to *generation*. We deſire to proſtrate our ſouls at the footſtool of thy glorious throne, adoring thee as a being of tranſcendent and incomprehenſible majeſty, of abſolute rectitude and perfection of nature, of ſpotleſs purity, of ſtrict inflexible juſtice, of unerring and fathomleſs wiſdom, of boundleſs uncontroulable power, of unlimited unchangable goodneſs, worthy to be praiſed, feared, and loved by all thine intelligent creatures. We deſire, with the humbleſt reverence, to adore thee, as the great creator of *heaven and earth, and of all things viſible, and inviſible*; who haſt diſplayed thine infinite power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, in the moſt illuſtrious and aſtoniſhing manner, in all thy works of creation: So that *the heavens declare thy glory, and the firmament ſheweth thine handy-work; the whole earth is full* of abundant teſtimonies of thy *loving kindneſs and mercy*; and the minuteſt of *thy works praiſe thee.*

WE adore thee, likewiſe, as the ſupreme lord and governor of all things, whoſe ſovereign and efficacious providence is over the whole univerſe; conducting, and diſpoſing, all events for the general good of thy creatures, and for the particular advantage of thoſe who ſincerely ſerve thee, and place their humble truſt and

and confidence in thy mercy. We moſt highly rejoice, that thou *the* LORD GOD *omnipotent*, moſt wiſe, moſt righteous, and moſt merciful, *reigneſt*. We rejoice in the propitiouſneſs and clemency of thy government, in the reaſonableneſs, equity, and purity of thy laws. We eſteem it our high honour, and our ineſtimable privilege, that we have liberty to ſpread our wants, and difficulties before thee; who art *able to do exceeding and abundantly for us, beyond all that* we are able either *to ask or think*, and art tenderly concerned for the happineſs of all thy creatures. We refer ourſelves, and the management of all our concerns, to thine unerring conduct, being ſolicitouſly *careful for nothing*, but *in every thing by prayer and ſupplication*, with fervent and devout thankſgivings, *making known our requeſts unto thee*. O everlaſting *father of mercies, O* GOD *and father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt*, incline a favourable ear to our ſupplications; and *enter not into ſtrict judgment with us, thine* unrighteous and *unworthy ſervants!*

WE have great reaſon, O GOD, with ſhame, and remorſe, and the deepeſt contrition of ſoul, to confeſs before thee our manifold ſins, and the heinous and aggravated provocations, which we have offered to thine heavenly majeſty. We have offended againſt thee, our creator, and father, our ſupreme and moſt righteous governor, our conſtant benefactor, and the eternal fountain of good. We have violated thine holy laws, affronted thy ſovereign authority, and abuſed thy tender mercies. We have, in many inſtances, acted unbecoming the dignity of our reaſonable nature, as men, and unſuitably to our high character, and glorious hopes, as chriſtians. We have *ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee*, before thine omniſcience, thy ſtrict juſtice, thine abſolute and immaculate purity, and are *not worthy to be called thy children*. But our hope and confidence is in thine infinite mercy, O GOD.

And

And to encourage this hope, thou haſt proclaimed thy *name* (by which thou deſireſt, eſpecially, to be known) to *be the* LORD, *the* LORD GOD, *abundant in goodneſs, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin*; who, though thou wilt *by no means clear the* incorrigible *guilty, yet deſireſt not that any one* reaſonable and immortal ſoul, which thou haſt made, *ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance. Be merciful unto us, O* GOD, be merciful unto us *according to thy loving-kindneſs*, and, *according to the multitude of* thine eſſential and unchangable *mercies, blot out all our tranſgreſſions.*

AND that we may be completely qualified for thy pardoning grace, according to the general condition which thou haſt fixed, (not arbitrarily, but becauſe it is eternally *fit* and *neceſſary* in the reaſon of things) grant, that we may exerciſe moſt humble and unfeigned repentance, for all the errors of our paſt conduct: And wherein we have done amiſs, enable us, by thy kind concurrence with our own ſincere endeavours, to do ſo no more. Let us look upon all vice, and moral depravity, with averſion, and horror, as the ſtain and infamy of our reaſon, a contrariety to thy moſt perfect nature, and tending to introduce deformity, diſorder, and miſery into the moral world. *Create in us, O* GOD, *pure hearts, and renew right ſpirits within us. Caſt us not away from thy preſence, and take not thine holy ſpirit from us.* And to that end, we pray, *that thou wouldſt cleanſe us from all our ſecret faults. Keep back thy ſervants alſo from wilful and preſumptuous ſins, that they may not have dominion over us*, and, by degrees, entirely over-rule the authority of conſcience, and root out our natural ſenſe of good and evil. But being delivered from theſe fatal obſtructions to an entire reformation of the temper of our minds, and of our outward manners, may *the meditations of our hearts,*

the words of our mouths, and *the action of our lives*, become from hence-forth, and to the end of this our probationary ſtate, *acceptable in thy ſight*, O LORD, our ſtrength, *our redeemer*, and our judge!

AND, as the only juſt foundation of all religious duty and ſervice, be pleaſed to grant, O GOD, that we may be careful, evermore, to maintain and cultivate exalted and honourable apprehenſions of thy perfections, and providence, and, above all, juſt and worthy conceptions of thy moral character. May we *ſanctify thee in our hearts*, and make thee the object of our ſupreme and habitual reverence and veneration; and *love* thee *with all our underſtandings, with all our minds, and with all our ſtrength*, as the beſt and moſt amiable of all beings. And let it be our higheſt ambition, and what we eſteem the chief honour, and *happineſs*, of our intelligent nature, to reſemble thee, ——*to be holy, as thou art holy, merciful as thou art merciful, and perfect*, in proportion to the extent of our weak and limited powers, as thou, *our father, who art in heaven, art perfect*. O thou great ruler of the world, and diſpoſer of all events, may we conſtantly acknowledge, that all thine orders and regulations are infinitely wiſe, and gracious, and, with entire compoſure, and calm reſignation of mind, acquieſce in all the diſpoſitions of thy providence——Being firmly perſwaded, that, when the outward face of things is dark and diſconſolate, and ſeems moſt entangled and confuſed to our deluded imaginations, or to our proud and diſcontented paſſions, that, even then, every thing is rightly conducted by thine inviſible hand, and upon the ſtricteſt principles of wiſdom, juſtice, and of paternal and invariable goodneſs.

AND

And as thou haſt, in the nature of things, inſeperably connected religion with moral virtue, we moſt humbly pray, that we may faithfully diſcharge the duties we owe one to another, as well as the duties of piety, which more immediately relate to thee our God. Let us *love mercy*, and delight in doing good, as well as in *walking humbly before thee.* Let us practice impartial juſtice, ſtrict inviolate fidelity, generous and diffuſive benevolence, and exerciſe tender ſympathy and compaſſion, towards all that are in diſtreſs. Let us *rejoice with thoſe that rejoice*, and *weep with thoſe that weep*; *and bear one another's burthens*, that ſo we may *fulfil the law of Chriſt. Let us learn of him*, to be gentle and condeſcending, *meek and lowly in heart*; and, in order to this, may we endeavour thoroughly to mortify pride, and raſh anger, ſtubbornneſs and obſtinacy of ſpirit, and root out of our natures, all the ſeeds of malice and revenge. May we be affable and obliging to all, and cultivate the ſublime principles of univerſal goodneſs, and a love of all mankind; which no private prepoſſeſſions, no national animoſities, no religious differences, can controul, or extinguiſh; that ſo, throughout the whole of our conduct, we may dignify our natures, and recommend religion; be lovely in ourſelves, and agreeable and uſeful to others; and endeavour to the utmoſt of our capacities, to introduce univerſal peace, concord, and happineſs.

And that we may be the more effectually diſpoſed, for performing the indiſpenſable duties, which we owe to thee our God, and to our fellow-creatures, may we be ſtrict in all the offices of ſelf-government, and reſtrain all our affections and appetites within due bounds, that they may all remain in a ſtate of ſtrict ſubordination to the eternal law of reaſon, and the holy

goſpel of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. May we be ſober, and chaſte, and *temperate in all things, and keep our hearts with all diligence, becauſe out of them are the iſſues of life*; remembering, that thine all-ſeeing and heart-ſearching eye, O moſt holy governor of mankind, is upon us, and that thou wilt *bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

O LORD, *who knoweſt our frame, and remembereſt that we are but duſt*, have compaſſion on our frailty and infirmity, and *ſuffer us not to be tempted, beyond what we are able to bear*, that we may *never remove our integrity from us*, and that *our hearts may not reproach us as long as we live*; but that *this may be the conſtant matter* of *our rejoicing, even the teſtimony of our conſciences, that in ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, we have had our converſation in the world.* Let no difficulties ever diſcourage us, or break the force of our pious and holy reſolutions. Let none of the allurements and vain pleaſures of this world debaſe our minds, and taint and corrupt our innocence. Let us not, for the ſake of ſuch ſuperficial, tranſitory, and unſatisfying trifles, forfeit our hope of immortality. But let the conſciouſneſs of our ſincere endeavours to ſerve thee, and anſwer the end of our creation, ſupport us under all the revolutions and changes, and under all the diſappointments and calamities of life; and fortify us againſt the anxieties and terrors of death: And, O GOD, in that awful day, when *the heavens, being on fire, ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, with all the works* of it, *ſhall be burnt up*,—— And when thou, ſupreme over all, ſhalt *by Jeſus Chriſt render to every man according to his deeds*, we may be able to lift up our heads before thee, with humble confidence and joy, and have

an

an entrance adminiſtered to us abundantly, into thine *everlaſting kingdom* of glory.

O FATHER *of lights*, thou eternal fountain of wiſdom, what we know not, teach thou us; what there is amiſs in us, diſpoſe us thoroughly to reform; what there is good in us, do thou help us to perfect. O GOD of infinite purity, deliver us from the dominion and tyranny of irregular luſts, from the darkening and inſlaving power of corrupt and criminal prejudices, from the influence of vain cuſtoms, and the contagion of evil examples; that we may dare even to be ſingularly good, and in times of uncommon and general depravity, to ſtand up, though it were alone, for thine honour, O GOD, for the happineſs of human nature, and for the ſacred and immutable principles of true religion, and prepare us for all events of thy providence, that we may behave with honour to our reaſonable frame, with honour to our chriſtian profeſſion, and to our particular characters and ſtations in life. Thus may we, by continually improving, under thine over-ruling guidance and direction, in generous and divine diſpoſitions, and by a ſtrict courſe of rational piety, of ſteady, perſevering, chearful, and amiable virtue, *adorn the doctrine of* GOD *our Saviour*; and, having made the beſt preparation for our great change by death, and for the awful conſequences of it, may we with ſerenity of mind, and peace of conſcience, *look for thy mercy unto eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt, our* LORD.

AND now, O GOD, we reſign ourſelves to thy care and guidance. Defend us this day [*or night*] from the innumerable evils and dangers, to which we are expoſed; proſper us in all our juſt, lawful, and honourable deſigns and undertakings; and may

may we acknowledge thee in all our ways. Direct us by thine unerring wisdom, defend us by thine almighty power, and provide for us by thy never failing goodness, while we are in this uncertain transitory life; and after death, we most humbly beseech thee, O God of our salvation and hope, to be our *inheritance, and exceeding great reward*, through *Jesus Christ* our Saviour, who hath taught us, when we pray, to address ourselves to thee, as

Our *father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us, this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them, that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.* Amen.

The E N D.

ERRATA *in the* firſt Volume.

Page	line	
27.	22.	for *atheiſt*, read *theiſt*
31.	24.	f. *cauſality*, r. *cauſualty*.
94.	17.	f. *mriads*, r. *myriads*.
ditto	24.	f. *the*, r. *their*.
97.	16.	f. *that*, r. *of*.
98.		the laſt, dele *and uſeful*.
126.	23.	f. *expreſſibly*, r. *expreſsly*.
133.	16.	f. *ſubſiſting*, r. *ſubſtituting*.
261.	13.	f. *canput*, r. *can put*.
278.		the laſt, f. *moralities*, r. *moral ties*.
292.	5.	dele *not only*.
295.	20.	f. *the*, r. *their*.
311.	11.	f. *total*, r. *fatal*.
312.	5.	f. *ing*, r. *rendering*.
314.	6.	f *that regard*, r. *that any regard*.
315.	6.	f. *errors*, r. *terrors*.
327.	23.	f. *for*, r. *of*.
329.	20.	f. *even*, r. *ever*.
366.	15.	f. *next*, r. *text*.
371.	1.	f. *unavailable*, r. *unavoidable*.
373.	11.	f. *diſtinction*, r. *direction*.
376.	19.	f. *faith*, r. *faint*.
390.	6.	f. *vigorous*, r. *rigorous*.
391.	6.	f. *and*, r. *is*.

ERRATA *in the* ſecond Volume.

Page	line	
31.	6.	for *all*, r. *and all*.
60.		the laſt, f. *ordinance*, r. *ordinances*.
65.	7.	f. *his*, r. *its*.
72.	15.	f. *the*, r *her*.
84.	1.	f. *is*, r *are*.
95.	27.	f. *growth does*, r. *growth*; *does*.
116.	9.	f. *men, the*, r. *men, and the*.
122.	18.	f. *parent*, r. *parents*.
144.	20.	f. *if fathers*, r. *of fathers*.
154.	12.	f. *wiſdom deal*, r. *wiſdom decree*.
179.	18.	f. *democritical*, r. *democratical*.
183.	19.	f. *peferable*, r. *preferable*.
205.	1.	f. *their*, r. *his*.
236.	16.	f. *ſtongeſt*, r. *ſtrongeſt*.
241.	27.	f. *brought*, r. *bought*.
249.		the laſt, f. *uncongruous*, r. *incongruous*.
250.	7.	f. *that not its*, r. *that it is not concerned about its*.
275.	22.	f. *joined*, r. *enjoined*.
ditto	24.	dele *in relation*.
284.	17.	f. *pevail*, r. *prevail*.
304.	21.	f. *ſpecies*, r. *ſpices*.
332.	2.	f. *men*, r. *man*.
342.	5.	*the revolutions*, dele *the*.
345.	24.	*more and generous*, dele *and*.
354.	23.	f. *etxend*, r. *extend*.
356.	7.	f. *diſt*, r. *didſt*.
363.	7.	f. *for ever, muſt*, r. *muſt for ever*.
365.	5.	f. *are*, r. *art*.
375.	9.	f. *there full*, r. *there is full*.
377.	14.	f. *particularly*, r. *particular*.

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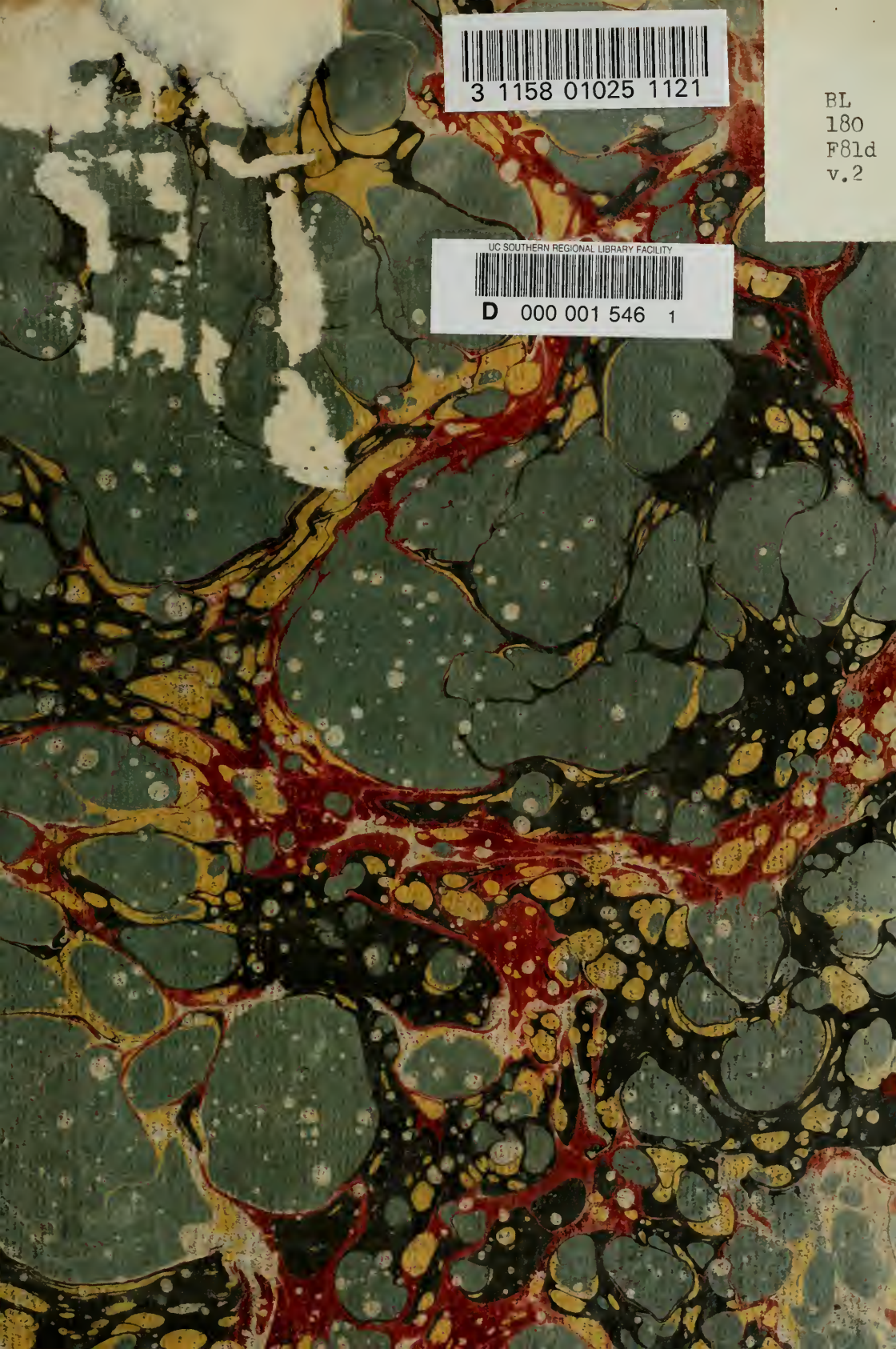
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